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LORD GAURANGA

OR

SALVATION FOR ALL.

BY

SHISHIR KUMAR GHOSE.

VOL II.

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PREFACE.

THE first conception of God, by the Hindus, is to be found in their sacred writings, the holy Vedas, composed thousands of years ago. This is how they describe God:

"Perfect truth, perfect happiness, without equal, immortal, absolute unity whom neither speech can describe nor mind comprehend; all-pervading; all-transcending; delighted with his own boundless intelligence; not limited by space or time; without feet, moving slowly; without hands, grasping all worlds; without eyes, all-surveying; without ears, all-hearing; without an intelligent guide, understanding all; without cause, the first of all causes; all-ruling; all-powerful; the creator, preserver, transformer of all things; such is the great One."—*Sir W. Jones's Works*, Vol. VI.

As a description of the First Cause and the Creator of the Universe, it has never been equalled: it is as grand as the Object.

But the Being, described above, did not meet the natural requirements of the man who hankered after a friendly Protector, a Companion, and an Object of love. There is, in the heart of man, an ardent desire for a communion with God, more or less developed according to his constitution or training. The desire is universal, and is felt by almost every one at one time of his life, for a closer intimacy with the mysterious Being Who had given him life. Generally, however, cares of the world get a preponderence in the heart, and eventually crush out this hankering after God.

This awakening, in the heart, of a desire for communion with God, is the beginning of Purva-rag. Those who can manage to keep the fire alive in the heart, find themselves slowly, though imperceptibly, attracted towards God.* But the God, as described in the Vedas, does not suit his limited capacity. The heart of such a man hankers after Him, but he finds that the grand Being, described in the Vedas, is beyond his reach. He feels that a companionship with the Being, described in the Vedas, is impossible for him. His heart seeks realization, but the God of the Vedas is unrealizable by the heart. And thus the Hindu saints, says a Hindu sacred book, finding the God of the Vedas as beyond reach, felt the necessity of giving definite shapes to the Deity, for the purposes of communion with Him. And thus Images came into existence,--Gods with definite shapes and human attributes. †

It was, of course, believed that God was something higher than man; so the Image representing Him, naturally came to be

* Every man in the world is restless and is striving after something,—what he does not know. He feels he is in want of something, the nature of which he does not precisely comprehend. He seeks, in the accomplishment of ambitious projects, the rest that he feels he is in need of. But he finds that worldly greatness, when secured, is a delusion and a snare ; he assuredly does not find happiness or peace in it. He marries ; he begets children ; in short, he gets all that he supposes would give him happiness. But yet he finds no rest. Pious men declare that this restlessness of every man,—this state of uncomfortableness, of being ill at ease with himself and his surroundings,—is solely due to the loss of the companionship of the Partner of his soul.

† It may pain the hearts of those who worship the Images of Gods to be told that their objects of worship were evolved out of pure imagination. Our own belief is otherwise. The saying in our Shastras, referred to above, is that, "the forms of the Gods were *imagined* for the benefit of the devotee," but we go further than that. These forms were, we believe, presented to the minds of the saints who longed to see Him. To long to see God is to ask Him to take a form. Those, who object to Image-worship and call it "idolatry", say that a communion is possible with a formless and all-pervading God. Yes, some

presented to the devotee as somewhat different from Him. Thus we have Images with several hands and several heads ; Images representing the different attributes of God,—His power, His wisdom, and so forth. We are assured by the saints that these Images appeared to the ardent devotees, according to the constitution of their minds. Those who feared God, to them He appeared in a frightful shape. Those who worshipped Him as a Bounty-giver, to them He appeared as such. And hence different Images came to be worshipped in the world. And thus the sloka of the Geeta,—" I serve as I am served," is considered one of the main pillars upon which religion itself is founded.

But some bhaktas, by earnest devotion, were at last able to realize that it was a libel on God to liken Him to a wilful and all-powerful sovereign. They came to realize that He was nothing of the kind, but only an object of love. Indeed, they felt an irresistible attraction for Him, and this because of their own character. Themselves pure and possessing a sacrificing and loving heart, and having acquired distaste of worldly pleasures, they hankered after love, and therefore at last realized that the greatest object of love to man was no other than God Himself. He was the superior Partner, and thus the nearest and dearest object of his soul. To a devotee who loves God, He therefore appears as an object of love. Such a Being must

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sort of slight communion is possible, but not realization. This is, however, a matter of experience. The devotee who is satisfied with communion with an invisible God, does not know that more direct communion with Him is possible, and has been achieved. Communion with God is followed at least by eight symptoms, *viz*, pulak, tears of joy, shivering, samadhi (death-like trance) etc. etc. Indeed, all these eight symptoms, enumerated in the sacred books, follow ecstacy by whatever cause produced. The communion with God produces ecstacy, hence the appearance of the symptoms. When, therefore, there is no ecstacy, *i. e.*, when there are no symptoms indicating it, the devotee can rest assured that there is no communion with God. Communion with God is not a myth, nor the ecstacy which follows it.

be a man,—a man physically, intellectually, morally and spiritually perfect.

Thus the seeds of Vaishnavism were planted in the solitary human heart. But his fellows, not having his disinterested devotion, failed to realize this precious knowledge that God is dearer than all. And then Messiahs, and latterly Lord Gauranga, worshipped by his followers as an Incarnation of God Himself, came to bear witness to the truth. The devotee can attain to the highest truth by his own exertions; but ordinary people need a Messiah to be able to realize and accept it. What Jesus taught was known beforehand, but he confirmed the principles known before, and then they were accepted by millions. What Lord Gauranga taught was likewise known to a few before his time, but he distributed it to millions. For a fuller discussion of this and other cognate subjects, the reader is referred to the Appendix.*

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* Madame Blavatsky, in her Secret Doctrine, enumerates the names of Avatars such as Krishna, Budhha, Jesus, Gauranga, etc. The leelas of all Avatars are known to the world, except those of Gauranga, the last. The present book is an attempt to supply that want.

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CHAPTER I.

TO SANTIPORE.

THE Lord one morning suggested to Nitai that they should proceed together to Santipore, to pay a visit to Advaita who had, with Haridas, returned to his native town. Shachee was informed of the project, and persuaded to permit of its being carried into effect, and soon afterwards the two friends set forth on their journey. Santipore, as already explained, is situated some ten miles below Nadia, on the bank of the same river, the Bhagirathi. When they had accomplished half the way, they approached a village called Lalitpur, which has since been swallowed up by the river. Here, on the bank of the river, and a little apart from the main village, they came upon an isolated hut. "Whose hut may this be?" enquired the Lord. Nitai who had frequently travelled by this road and had some acquaintance with the owner, replied: "It is occupied by a Sannyasee and his wife." "A Sannyasee with a wife must be a strange creature," said the Lord, whose astonishment was natural, seeing that the term Sannyasee is generally applied to one who has given up all his worldly goods, forsaken society, and become, in a manner, dead to the things of this life. "Let us call upon the pious man," said the Lord; and having said this, they advanced to the open door. Nitai being himself a Sannyasee, and wearing the garb of one, was immediately welcomed by the owner, who came forward to meet him as a brother, and asked them to remain and accept what

hospitality he could offer. Nitai had never been in the habit of rejecting a meal, when offered to him, and on this occasion he accepted the invitation, though not with the cordial sanction of the Lord.

The Lord who had followed Nitai, now advanced to his side, and saluted the Sannyasee in the customary manner. The Sannyasee thereupon blessed him with these words: "May you be blessed with education, wealth, a dutiful wife and obedient children." To this blessing, the Lord replied, though in a submissive tone, that as a Sannyasee he should have offered him more substantial blessings. The Sannyasee, highly offended at that remark, looked the Lord full in the face. To him the Lord appeared simply as a young man of twenty-three, of handsome presence and guileless expression. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about the Lord was his honest, guileless look, which convinced everyone who observed him that he had no guile in his mind, and no impurity in his heart. Sinful acts or even unworthy thoughts leave their impress on the face. A glance at the face of the Lord always convinced even a stranger that no unworthy thought had agitated its owner.

The Sannyasee could perceive that the stranger, who had resented the blessings offered to him, was a young man who had nothing of the aggressive spirit in him; so he replied more gently than he had intended: "Why do you object to the terms of my blessings? Have I not offered you the things that men most hanker after?" In reply the Lord said: "As we are here on earth only for a short period, no merely earthly blessing can do substantial good. I expected from a pious man like you the inexpressible blessing of bhakti to God." The Sannyasee now lost his temper and replied angrily: "I have travelled all over India; visited most of its sacred shrines; and you are only a stripling. Is it not impertinent on your part to come and tell me what my duties are?" Seeing the state of affairs, Nitai intervened and said: "Why,

brother, do you mind what this ignorant young man says? I know your worth!" The Sannyasee was mollified, and suspected that the Sannyasee before him (Nitai), after hypnotising the silly young man, (the belief in such powers being universal), was leading him away from home, for an unknown purpose of his own. So, without pursuing the discussion further, he retired in order to fetch some fruits, with which he soon returned. After placing them before his guests, the Sannyasee asked Nitai whether he would also fetch some *ananda* (joy). Just then his wife called him aside, and the opportunity was taken by the Lord to ask Nitai what their host meant by *ananda*. Nitai smiled and said that he meant by *ananda* "spirituous liquor."

A Sannyasee is one who has forsaken society and who is prohibited from even seeing the face of a woman. But here we see a man calling himself a Sannyasee, who lives with a wife, in a comfortable hut, on the outskirts of a large village, like any ordinary mortal, and who is addicted to spirituous liquor. The fact is, he was only a *tantric* Sannyasee, or one holding *tantric* doctrines of the Veera class.

When the Lord heard that *ananda* meant liquor, he felt as if he had fallen into the clutches of an ogre. He hastily rose in alarm, leaving his tiffin unfinished, to depart, and beckoned Nityananda to follow him. One would have expected the Lord to make his way to the public road, but he did not venture to do so, and to avoid such a dreadful thing as the pursuit of a *tantric* Sannyasee with *ananda* in his hand, the Lord plunged straight into the Ganges, followed by Nityananda, and with a few strokes of their powerful arms they soon reached the middle of the broad and formidable Ganges.*

* According to the modern teetotaler the safest course is not to drink, taste, or smell liquor; but the Lord taught mankind by his own example, that, when one is tempted with an offer of drink, the safest course for him is to fly to some place inaccessible to pursuit.

Santipore was ten miles from Nadia, they had come only half that way, and they now determined to perform the remainder of the journey by swimming, rather than trust themselves to the public road; and as both were possessed of great physical strength and endurance, and were first-class swimmers, the feat was in no way remarkable for them, especially as the current was in their favour. Alligators, it is true, infested that part of the river, which became dangerous then, it being the beginning of the rainy season. But Nitai * had no fear of alligators, and, of course, the Lord had not.

While Lord Gauranga and Nityananda were proceeding down the middle of the mighty Ganges, the latter heard the Lord muttering his threats against Advaita in these words: "So Advaita has resolved to forsake bhakti and teach gyan † as a means of salvation. I will to-day cure him of his folly." Now, hitherto Nitai had no idea why the Lord was going to Santipore so suddenly; he had accompanied the Lord only because he had been directed to do so. The few words threateningly muttered by the Lord, however, gave him an inkling of the object with which the Lord had undertaken the journey. On hearing the Lord speak, he turned his face towards him and saw, to his amazement, that the Lord was then in his divine state. Indeed, though His body was immersed and with little more than His head above water, still Nitai could see the light of "million suns" ‡ playing around His body. Hitherto Nitai, as was usual with him, had been in a happy frame of mind, but the threatening

* The writer of the Chaitanya Bhagabat, who was himself a disciple of Nitai, says that when Lord Nitai saw an alligator with his head above the surface of the stream, he used to swim out to catch it.

† It has been stated more than once that there are Dvaita and Advaita *badies*, the latter depending for salvation upon their own resources, etc. (Vide Vol I. pp. XLI.)

‡ Chaitanya Bhagabat.

words of his Master, uttered in his character of God Almighty, led him to think seriously of the fate in store for Advaita.

Well, in good time they reached the bathing-ghat of Advaita, where they left the water, and proceeded to his house which stood, a short distance off, on the bank. As they advanced from the ghat, a figure as of gold, enveloped in a subdued light, with Nitai behind him, could be seen making his way hurriedly towards Advaita's house. The Lord entered through the open door and at once confronted his host, who was seated inside, surrounded by his disciples, the chief of whom was Haridas. On the arrival of the visitors, Advaita rose to greet them, but the Lord, without waiting for his salutation, looked at him with threatening eyes. He addressed Advaita thus: "Tell me, which do you prefer as a means of salvation,—bhakti or gyan?"

To make clear the cause of this action on the part of the Lord we must go back a little, in order to relate the events which led Advaita to quit Nadia and return to his native town. When the dramatic representation, an account of which will be given in the next chapter, was over, Advaita recovered his ordinary senses. So completely had he been taken possession of by the influences, exercised on him during the performance, that when he returned to consciousness, he was unable to remember anything he had done and said during the progress of the play. He asked others for information with regard to these, and when he heard what had happened he felt very much humiliated.

Says the book "Chaitanya Chandrodaya": "Advaita thus communed with himself: We have heard of men being possessed, that is what appears to have occurred to me on the day the dramatic performance was held. I remember nothing that I said or did; but gather from those who were present, that I had acted in an extraordinary manner. I owe it all to Bishwambhar (the Lord Nimai) who is gifted with marvellous, even supernatural, powers. Of this there can be no doubt. On the occasion in question

I became a puppet in his hands, and he made me do whatever he liked."*

Advaita naturally felt that he had been made a fool of, and had become a laughing-stock to all his compeers. He was seventy-six years of age, and had hitherto pursued a strict, well-defined course in religious matters. He had worshipped God with *Tulsee* leaves and flowers, and chanted well-established orthodox hymns and mantras. But on that occasion he had been led to abandon all his previous practices, and, carried away by his feelings, to dance and sing like a drunken man. Would it be prudent, he thought, for him now, towards the last days of his life, to change all his previous opinions and methods, and adopt others? Bhakti is good, but gyan is good also, and all the most respectable saints say, that it is better than its rival. As a matter of fact, the bhakti, which Bishwambhar is teaching, has made his followers act like mad men: dancing wildly with up-lifted arms, while musical anklets jingle on the feet! Arguing thus, Advaita determined to have nothing further to do with the Lord's doctrines and practices.

But there was a difficulty. He had often made the same resolve, and had been compelled to break it. He had made his resolutions in the absence of the Lord. But in his presence he had always failed to stick to them. He was afraid that Bishwambhar would again try to entangle him. But was he not a man who had devoted fifty years of his life to spiritual culture? If Bishwambhar again came to meddle with his belief, he (Advaita) would defy him and resist him. With this resolve he had left Nadia and returned to Santipore.

So Advaita was teaching his disciples, including Haridas,

* In chronological order, an account of the dramatic representation, described in the succeeding chapter, ought to have been given first. But for reasons which need not be enumerated here, I have chosen to make the present arrangement, *i. e.* to give it in the next chapter.

that there was no religious philosophy equal to that of gyan, despite the contrary opinion of Bishwambhar. It would be suicidal, he urged, to sacrifice gyan in order that they might sing and dance and otherwise behave like lunatics. Some of his disciples took him at his word and arrayed themselves against the Lord, though, as was to be expected, Haridas remained staunch in his adherence to the doctrines preached by his young master. He was, at the same time, much concerned to understand what had led Advaita apparently to oppose the sweet Lord. Well, the Lord Nimai was aware of these things, and, being accompanied by Nitai, had journeyed to Santipore in order to draw Advaita again into his fold. This time the Lord was, however, in an angry mood. The Lord, no doubt, felt that Advaita was carrying his unbelief rather to an unreasonable extent. So, what the Lord did, was to come to Santipore, force himself abruptly into the presence of Advaita and ask him to explain, in the midst of his disciples, which was the better as a means of salvation,—bhakti or gyan?

Now, this question was asked by Nimai when he was not in his ordinary, but in his divine, state. Everything in him betokened it. The divine light that surrounded him, his countenance which showed irresistible will and power, and the authoritative tone of his voice, led everyone to quail before the Figure. But Advaita had made a firm resolve to resist the influence, and being a saint of great power, he succeeded in resisting the Lord for the moment. Said he, "Of course, gyan is superior to bhakti."

The Lord replied: "Yes, I know that that is your present opinion, but I have come here to cure you of your folly," saying which he fell upon Advaita, and began to chastise him.

Now, the Lord was a young man of twenty-three, of immense physical strength, whereas Advaita was a small man of seventy-six. Those present, therefore, namely, Advaita's disciples, might

have been expected to attempt to protect the old man from this unprovoked assault of the younger upon the stronger. But they did not, for they could not. Advaita's wife, however, rushed forward to her husband's assistance. She had herself been blessed by the Lord as scarcely any woman was ever blessed before. The Lord had sent for the couple, and brought them to Nadia against their will, for the purpose of revealing Himself to them. The Lord usually addressed Seeta, the wife of Advaita, as "mother," and she had come to regard him, not only as the Lord God, but also as an inexpressibly dear object. But when her husband was being assaulted, all her previous regard vanished from her mind; her bhakti for the Lord, her love for Him, nay, her knowledge of the fact that Nimai was Sree Krishna Himself, left her for the moment, and the woman got the upper hand of the devotee. She rushed forward wildly and shouted for help, in the anguish of her soul. Said she, addressing the Lord: "Why do you beat him? What has he done to you? Are you not ashamed to beat a Brahmin and an old man? Forbear in the name of everything sacred. He will die, and you will have to answer for his death."

Seeing that her words were making no impression on the Lord, she turned to Advaita's followers, and said: "What cowards you are that will not move a finger to save the old man, your preceptor? What a shame! Don't you see that he is killing the old man?" It was in this manner that the old lady, in her distraction, addressed the Lord and the disciples of her husband.

The Lord had felled Advaita to the floor and was administering to him blow after blow. Those who were present as spectators, were doing nothing to protect Advaita from the blows. This seemed strange to Seeta, his wife. But the old man's pupils saw a stranger spectacle which kept them enthralled.

What they saw was that Advaita himself was not only not moving a finger to defend himself, but was not even uttering a

groan or even a protest. He was passively submitting to the blows, as if he were urgently in need of them, and they were, therefore, exceedingly welcome to him. Nay more; it seemed to them that Advaita was not only not suffering any pain from the blows, but was actually drawing infinite pleasure from their application; his beaming face shewed this unmistakably. In this belief they were confirmed by the short ejaculations of Advaita himself. For he now and then gave vent to his feelings by words like these: "Ah! delightful!" "These are blessings indeed!" "Ah, my Lord! now I feel how good and merciful you are!" Almost every blow delivered by the Lord was followed by some such expression from Advaita. It seemed very evident to the by-standers that every blow inflicted upon the saint meant in effect the infusion of ecstacy into his person! Indeed, this ecstacy at length so overpowered Advaita that he could no longer remain in a passive state. And when he showed that he had had enough of chastisement and was desirous of rising to his feet the Lord left him.

The saint rose, and began to dance with uplifted hands, exclaiming: "This is mercy, indeed! Come, the dwellers of Heaven and of Earth, and witness the mercy of my Lord. Though I forsook him, nevertheless he has not forsaken me. I forsook him and he has come even to my house to win me back again. Where is there so much mercy as in the All-merciful Lord?"

The attitude of Advaita quieted his wife at once. She stood speechless, like the others, watching the extraordinary scene enacted before them—the doings and sayings not only of Advaita but also of the Lord. The Lord, as we have said, did not object when Advaita made an attempt to rise. He left him and went out and sat on the veranda, as if tired. Every one could see that the Lord was in His divine state. He sat down and muttered to Himself, in a voice, which however every one heard, Advaita included: "If you must resort to gyan for your sal-

vation, you had no business to pray for an Avatar." * Advaita heard what the Lord muttered and he came forward to acknowledge his obligations. He caught hold of the feet of the Lord and touched them with his head. Just at this moment, Nimai recovered his normal state and saw what the old saint was doing. He never permitted Advaita to salute him when he was in his human state; on the other hand, he always revered the old saint almost as if he were his father or spiritual Guru. But here Advaita was not only saluting him, but doing it in a manner which only the meanest servant is permitted to do to the highest master. Indeed, no sooner had the Lord regained his normal state, than the faintly visible light which had surrounded his person disappeared, and his countenance, which had until then worn a commanding expression, assumed its natural meekness. He saluted Advaita with humility and implored him never again to pain him by showing him such extraordinary honour!

Advaita perceived that the Lord had assumed his human state, and thereupon hastily let go his feet. The Lord, as if

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* Those who believe in an impersonal God cite the Geeta for their authority. The Geeta contains the lectures which the Lord Sree Krishna delivered to Arjoon. Now, this very fact of God speaking in human shape as Sree Krishna to Arjoon, is conclusive proof of God being personal even according to the Geeta. The manner in which God has been described in the Bible proves the same thing. Jehovah speaks with the angels and with Jesus: He sends his son to save mankind, and these facts also go to prove that God is a personal God, that is to say, is a distinct entity. Christians object to idolatry. But the Christians believe in a personal God, which shows that in their heart of hearts they believe that He has a spiritual form. The Vaishnavas likewise say that His form is spiritual. The Vaishnavas go further and declare that there are men who have not the capacity of conceiving and worshipping the spiritual Image of the God-head, and who ought, therefore, to begin by worshipping Him through an Image of the Creator made of a material substance. Advaita-badism is incompatible with Avatar.

awakened from a dream, looked in the face of the saint, to enquire what the matter was. But every one remained silent. The Lord, however, had a faint recollection of what he had said and done, so having cast an imploring look at the saint, he besought him to tell him frankly whether he had, in any way, acted in an improper manner. "Tell me, Acharjya," said he, "I beseech you, if I have in any way offended you." Advaita and Nitai exchanged glances and both smiled. In reply Advaita assured the Lord that he had done nothing improper. The Lord, however, was not quite satisfied with the explanation,—perhaps he had noticed the glances that had passed between Nitai and Advaita; so he again addressed the latter with folded hands and in the humblest terms possible. "My Lord Acharjya," said he, "do not make any difference between me and Achyoot, your son. Consider me as a son, ignorant and uncultured. You must teach me my duties; and if I in any way offend you, you must reprove me for it, and in all things concerning me do as a parent would do in regard to an ignorant child."

Advaita assumed the tone of an elder, and said: "Of course, of course; but you seem to have besmeared yourself with mud. Is it not proper that you should bathe? I think it is time that we should all go to the Ganges and bathe." The Lord examined his own person to find that what Advaita said was true, he having, in his struggle with the saint in his wet clothes, actually covered himself with mud. He rose to go to bathe, and saw before him Seeta who was watching him. He immediately addressed her thus: "Mother, I must confess, I am very hungry. Be quick in making your offerings to Krishna. I must have *Prasad** immediately."

*As the Christians offer grace before taking food, so a good Hindu never takes anything which has not been first offered to God. The food which has been offered to God is *prasad*.

The lady, delighted at the address, ran to prepare the offerings, that is to say, to cook the meal. A few moments before she had forgotten all her past experiences and feelings in regard to the Lord. She had used harsh expressions to him, but now she was again all love. As for the Lord himself, he had no knowledge whatever that a few moments before he had assaulted her husband.

A short recapitulation of the incidents related above may be necessary here. The way, in which Advaita had been made to act during the dramatic performance, an account of which, as I said before, would be found in Chapter II., had given him alarm. He found to his dismay that he was forgetting all he had learnt before, that he was being made to do what willingly he would never have done before, nay, he was almost being made to lose his identity. So he resolved to make a final struggle to release himself from the spell which the young son of Jagannath had thrown over him. He had observed that the presence of the Lord always cowed him, so he had resolved to defy him boldly even in his presence. With this resolve he was preaching anti-bhakti doctrines to his followers. His doctrines, when summarized, would stand thus: He (Advaita) has drained the contents of all the *Shastras* (sacred books) and has found that, from the beginning to the end they have all given preference to gyan. To go against these doctrines in his old age would, on his part, be an act of extreme imprudence. As for an Avatar the sacred books do not predict any. Of course, Nimai possesses enormous occult powers. In proof of this he recounted how he had been made a fool of on the night the dramatic performance was held. But it would be folly in him to take Nimai for an Incarnation of God on such slender grounds. He had no doubt been hypnotized.

When the Lord came and asked Advaita to state which was the better—gyan or bhakti, Advaita found to his dismay that he

was again losing his self-co[illegible]l. But with gigantic efforts he managed to stammer out a[illegible] uttered protest against bhakti. And then followed the scene, [illegible]h I have described above. For the Lord Gauranga, the perso[illegible]ation of meekness and gentleness, to commit an assault upon an old man of seventy-six, would have been an outrageous act, if it had been really an assault at all, in the usual acceptation of the term. If it had been such an assault the Lord would have known it, but he knew nothing of it, for on coming to his human state he earnestly inquired whether he had in any way spoken or acted improperly. And again, had it been an ordinary assault, Advaita would have felt the effects of the blows, and would have resented the insult, as they were administered in the presence of his most important disciples, his children and his wife. But Advaita suffered no pain; but, on the contrary, the blows, as already stated, only infused ecstacy into his heart. Of course, Seeta, for the moment, forgetting past experiences, had put the incident down as an outrage, but she soon came to feel ashamed of her own weakness; and when the Lord bade her to prepare the meal, she ran to prepare the choicest available dishes for her dear guest.

The explanation of the above phenomenon, however, I can give in my own way. I have already said that the Lord had the power of imparting bhakti at his will, and he did not adopt the same manner of accomplishing his object in every case. Sometimes a look, sometimes a mere act of the will, sometimes a word was enough to fill his subject with the holy influence. In the case of the Kazi, it has been stated, that the Lord quietly touched one of his fingers when speaking to him, whereupon he was overpowered by the strength of his emotions, which led him to fall prostrate before the master. In the case of Advaita, a hard thinker, an intellectual man, who had already given settled forms to all his ideas, something more than a touch was perhaps necessary to expel all contrary humours, as the

physicians might say, in his heart. Advaita, before the assault, doubted the existence of a Personal God; but when he rose to his feet after the assault, he was a perfect believer!

The Lord, accompanied by Nitai, Advaita and Haridas, plunged into the Ganges and spent some time sporting in the water, and pelting each other with handfuls from the sacred stream in the excess of their joy. On their way back the Lord entered the temple where the Image Radha-Krishna was enshrined, owing to which fact, this temple and its Image have ever since been objects of especial reverence to all Vaishnavas. There, the Lord prostrated himself before the Image, and seeing this, Advaita also prostrated himself and in such a manner that his head almost touched the feet of the Lord. Haridas, in the same manner, fell prostrate immediately behind Advaita. Nitai, who came in after the others, on seeing this spectacle, remarked, "Here is a bridge by which to reach Brindaban." The remark led the Lord and his two companions to rise, and the former was shocked to see Advaita at his feet, and said so in tones of protest.

I must here explain an often-used metaphor of the Hindus. The death of men is likened to a turbulent river and the world itself to a temporary market-place, where men sell and purchase, whose permanent home is on the other side of the said turbulent river. Suppose a man after selling his wares and making his purchases in a market-place has to cross a dangerous river in order to get to his home on the other bank; the state of man in this world is likened to his. The market-place is the world, the river is death, and the man's home is his salvation. Here is a song of the Vaishnavas, in which Sree Krishna is addressed as the Great Pilot who ferries over all men to the other bank of the river, which separates the living from the dead:—

Ferry us over to the other bank, oh beautiful Pilot!
We have come to your ghat (ferry place) for that purpose.

We are poor and therefore cannot pay the ferry-toll.

And wherefore do we come to your ghat?

Because we have been assured, you are merciful.

Here is another song, in which Nitai is made to address all mankind:

Come, come, who want to be ferried to the other bank.

Our Lord Gauranga has opened a new ghat for the weary market-men.

At my Gauranga's ghat, no toll is demanded.

The sinner, the uninitiated are piloted free.

The reader, we hope, will now understand what Nitai meant by the salvation-bridge referred to above. Let a man gain the favour of Haridas, and he will be led to Advaita; Advaita will lead him to Gauranga, and Gauranga to Radha-Krishna, which is the highest object that man can attain.

From Santipore the Lord came back to Nadia, of course, bringing Advaita a prisoner, though now a willing one. But we are very much tempted to mention one incident which happened while the Lord was at Santipore. One day he suddenly appeared before Pandit Gauridas, a learned man and a saint of the first class, who, after leaving society, though not formally, was living on the other bank of the river in the town of Kalna, (a town which exists to this day) engaged in spiritual culture. Gauridas had heard of the advent of the Avatar, but had never taken the trouble to visit him or in any way to test his credentials. What he now saw before him was the sudden appearance of a beautiful youth with a noble countenance. The sight staggered him, as well it might do; but what appeared most remarkable to him was that this young man, who looked more like a celestial Being than a man, was carrying an oar on his shoulders!

The Lord arrived, and without ceremony addressed Gauridas thus: "I am coming from Santipore and have brought this oar for you." "What for?" asked Gauridas. "So that you may row

men across to the other bank," replied the Lord. Saying this the Lord wanted to hand over the oar to him, but Gauridas hesitated to accept it. He gazed at the figure before him with diverse feelings, and slowly addressed him thus : "To accept the oar is to accept serious responsibility. I must have the means to do the work entrusted to me." "That, of course," said the Lord. Gauridas pondered a moment : "Who is he that is so bold as to speak thus ?" And then enquired slowly. "Who may you be, pray, that issues such a peremptory command ?" The Lord replied that he was Nimai Pandit of Nadia. Gauridas bowed, took the oar, and accepted Gauranga as the Lord of his life. The Images of Lord Gauranga and Nitai, set up by Gauridas at Kalna, exist to this day, and thither pilgrims flock from all parts of India to pay homage to them. From that day Gauridas became one of the most celebrated of the Lord's worshippers. It may be mentioned here that the oar yet exists in the temple at Kalna. Gauridas performed the task imposed upon him with credit, for a large part of Orissa was converted by him and his followers.

Thus this young man of twenty-three never forgot that he had a mission to mankind. But more, he had the power to perform it with as much ease as a man drinks water. A pious man, who has the power of leading a sceptic or a sinner to piety, is likened to a touch-stone ; he makes gold out of iron, a bhakta of a sinner. But the Lord Gauranga not only led sinners to piety, but he did more. He created touch-stones out of sinners, that is to say, pious men of sinners with irresistible power for the conversion of other sinners !

The loathsome moral leper rises a sound man at the look of the Lord, and then he commands him to go and reclaim sinners, and he actually does so, by hundreds and thousands !

To make a conversion is beyond the power of man. A Napoleon cannot do so, nor a Newton. If the work of conversion is beyond the power of an ordinary man, the conversion of loath-

some moral lepers and learned and wise atheists is more difficult still. But the Lord converted them by a touch or a look, nay, converted them not into good and pious men, but into touch-stones, themselves competent to convert others! No one that had not received authority from above could do this. The irresistible power shewed by the Lord, while travelling in the south, was miraculous. Passing through a village, he embraced an inhabitant, who thereupon was not only converted himself, but was charged with the power of converting others.

A vivid description of this power, possessed by the Lord, will be found in "Chaitanya Charitamrita."

CHAPTER II.*

A DRAMATIC REPRESENTATION.

One day the Lord suddenly addressed his bhaktas in these words: "Let us have a dramatic representation of Lord Krishna's Leela." His companions at first could not understand what the Lord actually meant. The Hindus were familiar with the drama from time immemorial. The dramatic works which were popular in the country, were the creation of poets who had flourished in ancient times, but who had not meddled with Sree Krishna. No drama representing the Krishna Leela † was then extant, at least so far as was known. The bhaktas, therefore, eagerly asked the Lord to explain the meaning of his proposal. In reply, the Lord said that, for the purpose of appreciating fully the Krishna Leela, a dramatic performance by representing it, would be an excellent means. By such representation one might secure the indirect company of Him, the Lord Krishna, and thus not only secure the coveted spiritual ecstacy, but the purification of his soul.

It was then arranged that Budhimanta Khan, the Kayastha Zeminder, and Sadashiv Kabiraj, of whom mention has been made before, should be entrusted with the duty of making the

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* This chapter contains a description of the drama, the representation of which led Advaita to leave Nadia in a huff, noticed in the previous chapter.

† The Srimat Bhagabat leaves in doubt whether the Leelas of Krishna were performed in Brindaban on this earth or in that of the spiritual world. The Vaishnava has the choice of placing his Brindaban here or in the next world.

necessary preparations. It was further settled that the performance should be held at the house of the maternal uncle of the Lord, Chandra Shekhar.

The bhaktas were, however, very curious to know what part of the Leela of Sree Krishna would be represented, and who were to take part in the performance. Their idea was that a play divided into Acts and Scenes, ought first to be composed and properly rehearsed by the bhaktas, before spectators were allowed to witness it. The bhaktas, therefore, were naturally eager to know all particulars. They requested that the Lord should assign to each the part he was to act. In reply the Lord said that this would not be necessary. When the time came, every one would know the part he would be required to play.

"But is it not a fact," they enquired, "that in such matters a thorough and previous training is necessary? Should not the actors be instructed in the words that they must speak, as also in regard to the conduct of the play generally?"

The Lord replied that when the time arrived, every one would not only know what part he would be required to play, but what to say and how to act. "In short, friends," said the Lord, smiling, "you will be like puppets in the hands of a magician; some one else will make you do whatever is necessary, and you will not have to make any mental effort whatsoever."

The bhaktas still pressed for, at least, some definite idea on the subject, and the Lord replied: "Well, I think, I shall be Radha. Gadadhar will act the part of Lalita. The respected Nityananda will represent Radha's other attendant lady, Barai. Haridas will come on the stage as the Kotwal (City Constable) of Goloke, and Sreebash will act the part of Narada, the saint."

By way of explanation, we may say that Lalita is the chief maid of Radha; Barai is another attendant,—a relative and the oldest of all her maids. Narada is a saint, devoted to Sree Krishna,—a jovial, good man, fond of inciting people to quarrel

for the purpose of shewing them, in this indirect manner, the folly of losing their temper—a man of unblemished character and the most ardent friend of the weak, the sinner, and mankind in general.*

Sree Advaita inquired with folded hands, if he would be required to take a part. The Lord replied, again smiling: "You? It will be your duty to make every one do what is needed of him. You will have to be Sree Krishna Himself!" Seeing that the bhaktas were yet exceedingly curious to know all about the matter and that they were not at all satisfied with the explanations given to them regarding the drama, the Lord, in a mood of pleasantry, tried to mystify them still more. So he said that he, as Radha, would, of course, have to put on female attire. And then looking at Advaita with a wicked smile, he said: "I intend to appear as the most captivating damsel the world has ever seen, and, therefore, dear Lord Advaita, beware! for, I assure you, that none but those who have been able to bring their passions under absolute control, can then gaze upon me and not go stark mad."

Advaita took the remark seriously. He said that he never prided himself on his strength of mind; he knew that he had not been able to bring his passions under absolute subjection. "It seems, therefore," said he mournfully, "that I had better not witness the representation." †

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* I fear it will be a little difficult for those, not thoroughly initiated in the mysteries of the Krishna Leela, to realize fully the purport of this dramatic representation. Later on I shall try to give some explanation of the matter. Radha has eight principal attendant maids, who guard the eight doors of the secret bower where Radha and Krishna meet. Lalita is the principal. She represents poetry, music, and painting. The entire Leela of Krishna has an esoteric significance. But to the devotee everything in the end becomes real, and he enjoys supreme felicity in the company of those who take part in the sports of Krishna and Radha in Brindaban. The reader is referred to the Krishna Leela, described in Vol I.

† Advaita died at the old age of one hundred and twenty-six.

Sreebash immediately came forward and said, "I, too, must decline to be present, for, I, like Advaita, have not succeeded in subjugating my passions."

The Lord was somewhat discomfited. He replied jocularly: "Never mind. I shall give you the requisite strength of mind to resist my charms successfully."

Preparations were immediately made for the performance. The necessary paraphernalia were procured, including false moustachés, false hair, artificial trees, shrubs, creepers, flowers, and numberless other requisites. The big court-yard of Chandra Shekhar was converted into a stage. A green-room was prepared. The yard was covered with a huge canopy, and carpets were spread for the audience to sit upon. Of course, only those had permission to attend the performance who were bhaktas of the Lord. They came with their female relations. Thus Shachee and Vishnupriya came, as also Malinee (the wife of Sreebash), and her three sisters-in-law, accompanied by the wife of Murari. The ladies had a separate place in the inner part of the enclosure assigned to them. The bhaktas came in due course, and at the appointed time, the entrance to the theatre was closed. At the door stood Gangadas on guard, who was enjoined not to open it under any circumstance whatever. Vashudev Acharjya was entrusted with the duty of dressing the actors. Pundarik Vidyanidhi, Chandra Shekhar Acharjya, Sreebash and his three brothers were to sing on the occasion. All those who were required to act, including the Lord, entered the green-room to put on their respective dresses. The singers and the instrument-players and the audience remained in the theatre.

The performance began with the playing of the instruments. This was the orchestra. The party then invoked Sree Radha-Krishna to bless all mankind and grace the performance by their august presence, and also the presence of all their worshippers in Goloke. The song evoked profound feelings of bhakti, and

this was expressed by joyous peals of Haribole, repeated one after the other.

Just then Haridas appeared as the Kotwal (City Constable) of Goloke. He had put on a pair of huge moustachés, which gave him a martial appearance, and this effect was heightened by a big club resting on his shoulder. He came, and the first thing he did was to kneel and worship the stage with flowers in both his hands. He invoked the blessings of Sree Krishna, so that the stage might be converted into a real Brindaban. Thus, a dramatic performance, considered only as an object of amusement in other parts of the world, is, in India, generally utilized for the purpose of cultivating the celestial feeling of bhakti. Indeed, in India, the custom is never to go through any ceremony or work without first consecrating it to the Deity. While Haridas offered up his prayers, tears of joy bathed his cheeks. The audience was similarly moved. No one had gone there to amuse himself, but to cultivate his spiritual nature.

Haridas then addressed the audience. He announced himself as the Kotwal of Goloke, and said his duty was to awaken those who were sleeping in indolence, forgetful of their obligations to the Lord Krishna. "I have come here," said he, "to do my duty. Arise, awake, my friends! The Lord is good, the demand that he makes of you is small. Awake! life is short. No worldly possessions will accompany you to the grave, neither riches, nor worldly honour. Think of Krishna, talk of Krishna, worship Krishna, and live in Krishna."

When Haridas had made his passionate appeal, every one was very much affected and led to respond to it by loud shouts of Haribole. *

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* We wish Haridas were here for the purpose of awakening in us a sense of our own duty. The world has almost forgotten God; the appearance of a saint creates no stir; but the discovery of a gold-field convulses the universe. Yet gold can neither give us happiness here nor follow us to the other world.

The worship of the stage being over, Haridas appeared in a new character, that of stage manager. He addressed the audience again in these words: "I went this day to god Brahma, and found the respected saint Narada with him. When I had bowed to Brahma, Narada requested me to shew him the Leela of Sree Krishna in the form of a drama. The saint said that for a long time he had desired to see such a representation. I am now thinking how best to carry out his wish." So saying, he raised his head and saw Mukunda, his assistant manager, by his side. Haridas addressed Mukunda thus: "You have just heard what I have been ordered by Narada to do. Now make the necessary arrangements."

Mukunda.—Your request surprises me. Narada is the foremost Muni (saint) in the world. The Munis, by austerity and yoga, unite their souls with the Great Soul, and they enjoy spiritual ecstacy. How is it then that Narada, the greatest amongst them, could find pleasure in the Leela of Sree Krishna which He has performed in Brindaban, by taking a human form? Inferior people, it is true, cannot worship Sree Krishna, as the Great Soul of souls—as the Invisible Being Who permeates the universe,—Who is both in and out of everything,—they have therefore to contemplate Him in His human form, for, they cannot do it otherwise. But why should the great saint adopt the practice of the ignorant?

Haridas.—Do you not know what our great book, the Srimat Bhagabat, says in this connection? It is that even great Munis, who have by yoga and austerity succeeded in effecting a union of their souls with the Fountain of all good, and are thereby in the enjoyment of continual ecstacy, do yet hanker after the joys that proceed from the sight or contemplation of the human Leela of Sree Krishna. They attain to His lotus feet sooner by contemplating His Leelas, as a man, than by meditating Him as an

Abstraction, or an Energy, or a Light, or the Creator of this universe. *

Here one word of explanation is necessary. It has been stated before that the worshippers of God in India are divided into two classes, *viz.*, the Advaitabadis and Dvaitabadis. The former take their stand on the affirmation, "He and I are the same," and the latter on the fact that the devotee has a separate existence from that of God. The former, by austerities, purify their souls and at last succeed in making themselves *en rapport* with God as the Central Soul of the universe, and thus enjoy Brahmananda, *i. e.*, the *ananda* (ecstacy) that proceeds from a soul-to-soul union with the Great-Brahma, the original Soul of the universe.

The latter or the Dvaitabadis, on the other hand, give God a most beautiful form in order to realize Him; and they, in their mind, approach Him by His Leelas or works on earth. By this method, they try to create an ardent feeling in the heart, and eventually are able to say truly that, "Thou art mine and I am Thine," and to love Him accordingly. The latter derive Premananda (ecstacy derived from love), as distinguished from Brahmananda, by this process. The Dvaitabadis allege that the ecstacy that proceeds from Prem or love of God is infinite times superior to that which proceeds from Brahmananda, which is earned by austerities and yoga. Narada, though himself the greatest of yogis,

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* According to popular notions, there are many gods, each presiding over an interest. Thus, Saraswatee is the goddess of wisdom and knowledge. When the Hindus pray for knowledge, they pray to Saraswatee, and for wealth to Lakshmee, the goddess of wealth. But these gods and goddesses represent only the different energies of God Almighty. God Almighty who is Sree Krishna, ought not to be approached for favours, but only for salvation. In other words, one who wants a favour, may go to the gods and goddesses, but he that wishes for higher blessings, must go to the Supreme Head, who is Sree Krishna. The Gopees in Brindaban worship god Siva for favours, but they love Sree Krishna; so Him, properly speaking, they do not worship.

is also a bhakta who had, by that means, acquired love for God. In the above, he is made to give preference to the doctrine of the Dvaitabadis. *

The Dvaitabadis say, on the other hand, that God is, no doubt, limitless, but for the worshipper. He has a form which is called Sacchidananda-bigraha, that is, a beautiful form of "wisdom, spirit, and ecstacy." And that it is impossible to feel any tender feeling for the Lord unless He is contemplated in a human form. They say that the affirmation "He and I are the same" is quite correct, but not in the way the Advaitabadis understand it. It is easy to make the affirmation, but it is simply impossible for a man to feel or realize, that he and God Almighty are the same. If it had been possible, nature would have given him the power to realize it. But he cannot realize in his mind that he and God are the same; he only utters the phrase with his lips. For a man to say he is the self-same with God is blasphemy. "He and I are the same" is only so far true that when a man has been able to create bhakti, that is to say, create an attraction for Him, he can at last really attain the position of being almost the same with Him. A bhakta who has been able to create in himself such an attraction for God as can withstand all earthly attraction, has no fear of returning to earth again after death. The bhakta never loses his individuality, that is to say, is never born again

* It has been said before that there is a ceaseless dispute between the Dvaitabadis and the Advaitabadis in India. The Advaitabadis say that God is boundless as space, so that He can have no form; that the soul of man is a spark from God, the Great Soul, wherein it merges after due purification, and that this purification is effected generally after the soul has gone through many births. They have no great faith in bhakti. "To whom shall I do bhakti?" say they. "For, are not He and I the same?" There are less rigid Advaitabadis who seek a compromise in this way. They say that bhakti in the beginning is necessary, but when the soul has passed through the bhakti stage, then the worshipper ascends to the position of a yogi. All Advaitabadis agree that the way eventually to attain to Him is by wisdom (gyan) and not bhakti.

into this world after death, but has the privilege of enjoying immortal life, and of making onward progress towards God. The bhaktas admit that there is such a thing as Brahmananda, but they contend that a man has to destroy all his human feelings by yoga to obtain it. The *ananda* is derived by emasculating ones self, and, therefore, it can never be natural. That process is only natural which keeps a man as he is; and worshipping God by Premananda, does this. If it were the intention of God that a man should ultimately merge in Him, He would have never given him a separate existence &c. &c. But to proceed with the drama.

Haridas.—My daughters who have to perform the Leela have gone to Brindaban. They are so young and inexperienced, and Brindaban is so full of danger that I am anxious about their safety.

Mukunda.—Why, they are under the protection of Barai.*

Haridas.—Barai? She is too old to be of any assistance.

(Narad appears just then with a veena.†)

Sreebash represented Narad, and he came accompanied by a servant, who was no other then Suklambar. The actual play commenced from here, and it began with something like a miracle. The audience had come to witness a dramatic performance. It was begun with the invocation of Sree Krishna and Radha, and a fervid prayer. This created a holy feeling in the minds of the audience. The feeling increased in intensity, degree by degree, till the audience forgot that it was a dramatic performance

* Barai is a relation of Radha and her guardian, privy to the Leelas of Radha-Krishna.

† A veena is considered to be the most perfect and difficult of musical instruments in the world. Be it noted here, that the Indians carried the art of music to great perfection. The Europeans, in this respect, are much behind the Hindus. Italian music most nearly resembles the Hindu music, but the former has yet to be eveloped much to attain to the perfection of the latter.

at all. They felt that they were witnessing a real Leela of Sree Krishna. They had prayed that the stage might be converted into a Brindaban. The Lord, in fact, had listened to their prayer, and presented the living scenes of Brindaban to their view.

When the bhaktas asked the Lord to train the actors in the part that each would be required to act, he was pleased to tell them that they would need no rehearsal, and that all those divine figures, who performed the Leela in Brindaban, would themselves come to their assistance. Narad, the great Muni, as described in sacred books, and Sreebash, agreed in character. And thus Sreebash was taken entire possession of by Narad. When Sreebash appeared as Narad, the audience had yet some consciousness of their surroundings; for, Sachee, suspecting that it was no real Narad but Sreebash, asked Malinee, who was sitting by, whether or not her husband was acting the part of the saint. She in reply said, "it must be so, for, they say it is he, but you can see, it is simply impossible for any one to recognize him in his present character as my husband." Gradually both actors and audience became transported, and felt as if they were really in Brindaban. If Sreebash forgot himself and fancied that he was no other than Narad, others also forgot that he was Sreebash and took him for no other than Narad himself. The fact is, as has been stated above, Sreebash forgot himself entirely and personated Narad in every way, though the body was his.

Narad (addressing his attendant Suklambar).—I came to see Krishna Leela dramatized, but I do not see any acting here.

Just then enter some Gopees. Seeing them, Narad asks: ' Who are you, maidens?"

Gopees.—We belong to Braja, and are going to worship Shiva. May we enquire what holy saint we are addressing?

Narad.—I am an humble servant of Sree Krishna, by name Narad. (The damsels humbly bow to the saint.)

The chief of these maids, who was no other than Gadadhar and who looked more beautiful than the full moon when rising, not only saluted Narad, but burst into tears. He sobbed and prayed to Narad to grant him a favour. He said: "If you are that great Saint Narad, you can surely earn for me the lotus feet of Sree Krishna, who is now flourishing in Nadia as the son of Sachee."

Narad.—Thy desire shall be fulfilled by my blessing. Thou shalt obtain Him. But, beautiful ladies, you belong to Braja, the home of my dear Sree Krishna; you must know how to dance. Will you oblige me by showing me one of your dances?

Gadadhar, as a Gopee of Brindaban, was agreeable, especially as he was then beside himself with joy, and he began to dance to the music of khole and cymbal. While Gadadhar danced gracefully, Haridas, with his cudgel in his hand, went round and round the courtyard in leaps and bounds, wildly crying, "worship Krishna, talk of Krishna, think of Krishna; time flies; Krishna is all love; &c. &c." The admonitions of Haridas went home to the heart of the audience, as they saw before them the dancing Gadadhar in a state of ecstacy,—a specimen of those divine beings who have secured the bhakti of the Lord Krishna.

The other attendant of the Gopees reminded the maiden, who was represented by Gadadhar, that it was getting late and that she should proceed on her way to Brindaban, which she did, dancing.

Suklambar (to Narad).—Let us follow them to Brindaban, and see the Krishna Leela.

Narad.—Why, is not this Brindaban?

Suklambar.—Thakur! you have gone mad, that is all. What leads you to fancy that this is Brindaban?

Narad.—You are right. My Lord Krishna makes His people mad, mad with joy. Let us proceed to Brindaban. Help me please, for I cannot see my way.

The fact was, Narad was actually blinded by his tears, and was feeling his way like a blind man. Narad (Sreebash) then looked sublime!

Suklambar (angrily).—At this rate we shall never reach Brindaban.

Narad.—Why? What is the matter?

Suklambar.—If you dance for an hour after every step forward you take, it will be long before we arrive at that sacred place.

Narad, in truth, was making very slow progress, and that on account of his incessant dancing.

Narad.—You see, my good man, I am going to Brindaban where Sree Krishna dwells. I cannot resist the joy that overtakes me. In Brindaban He is visible to the Gopees who acquire Him by their love; while ascetics, by hundreds of years of austere yoga, cannot have even a glimpse of His lotus feet. Such is Brindaban and I am going there. How can I then help dancing, now and then?

Just then Sree Krishna played on his universal bewitching flute from a distance.

The sound, suddenly reaching their ears, when in an ecstatic state, enthralled, as it were, all those present.

Narad.—There! The flute of my Lord pours forth its delicious music. Sree Krishna is no doubt coming, for, the fragrance of His body has preceded him, and is delighting my heart. If I come across Him, I will not be in a condition to see any of his Leelas. Already I feel I am losing my consciousness. Let us go to a little distance and observe everything from a hiding-place.

As Narad leaves, enters Sree Krishna, accompanied by his cow-boy friends.

He has a flute in his hand and is dressed just like Sree Krishna. He is represented by Advaita, who was then seventy-six years old! But Krishna, as the Lover of the Gopees, is always represented as a tender youth. Sree Krishna Himself

having entered into the body of Advaita, the result was that the entire features of Advaita had undergone a complete change. The old man of seventy-six looked like a youth, and what is more, his personal attractions enthralled all the spectators. Having forgotten themselves,—some partially, some entirely,—the appearance of Krishna did not seem to them as an artificial representation, but almost a reality ; so they felt as if Sree Krishna Himself had appeared in their midst. His appearance was a signal for successive peals of Haribole from the male spectators, and "ulu" from the ladies. They then all began to observe critically the infinite grace of his feature, his limbs, his gestures, and movements. It was true that the body was that of Advaita, but the audience enjoyed almost all the advantages of a real visit from lovely Sree Krishna Himself.

Sree Krishna (to Sreedam, a cow-boy).—Of all places in the universe, this Brindaban delights me most. Just see how all things combine to make one delirious with joy. The flowers bewitch the eye by their beauty and madden the nose by their fragrance ; the birds delight the ears by their sweet music, and the bracing air soothes the body. Besides, there is no discord here ; all is peace and harmony. Nay, it is the very abode of love !

Sreedam.—Yes, Brindaban is sweet, but methinks, Thou and Thy sports are sweeter.

Sree Krishna.—But where is Madhu Mangal ? I don't see him here ?

Madhu Mangal, a young Brahmin, is the "clown" who enlivens Sree Krishna by his drolleries.

(Enters Madhu Mangal.)

Madhu Mangal (who is seen to be gasping for breath).—Friend, (addressing Sree Krishna) congratulate me ! This Brahmin (meaning himself) would have been murdered, but by virtue of your meritorious acts this terrible calamity has been averted. Just listen I saw an extremely old woman leading a number of exquisitely

beautiful milk-maids to Brindaban. That the old hag is a witch, every one could see. She was no doubt in search of a Brahmin youth for sacrificial purpose. I thought that if she only succeeded in catching me, she would offer me as a sacrifice at the shrine of Shiva. And what did I do? I left the hag behind by running, and here I am!

Sree Krishna (to Shubal, another cow-boy).—what and whom does the fool mean?

Shubal.—Perhaps, Sree Radha, accompanied by her maids, is coming this way.

Madhu.—Is that so? If Srimati Radha be coming here, she will no doubt fall into the clutches of my friend Krishna.

(Enter Sree Radha and other maids.)

The Lord Gauranga himself represented Radha, Nitai represented Barai, the old hag, referred to by Madhu Mangal, Gadadhar and others represented other maids. The Lord had told Advaita, in a jocular tone, that he would appear in the figure of such a beautiful woman as would lead him (Advaita) completely to lose his senses. As a matter of fact, the *debut* of the Lord created a feeling of wonder, and threw the entire audience into a state of indescribable ecstacy. He then looked like a woman of divine beauty; there was no trace of Nimai Pundit in his person, or of his being a man; his voice had lost its masculine character and became feminine, and exquisitely sweet.

Some thing here remains to be said, that is, what took place while the Lord was in the green-room. We have said before, that man acquires salvation by three methods, viz., pious acts, gyan or wisdom, and prem and bhakti.* We have also said that in the region of prem and bhakti, which is called Brindaban, Sree Krishna loves and is loved in return. In the region of gyan, that

* Thus the worshippers are divided into three classes, viz., those who attain to Him by bhakti and love, those who purify themselves by gyan (wisdom), and those who acquire virtue by meritorious acts.

is Mathura, Sree Krishna is a bounty-giver and rules there as a King. In the region of work, Dwarka, Sree Krishna is a householder. Sree Krishna was at first in Brindaban; from there he proceeded to Mathura, from Mathura to Dwarka. That is to say, He, step by step, materialized Himself to suit the capacity of His creatures. At Dwarka He had sixteen thousand wives.* The foremost was Rukminee, the daughter of a King. Her brother wanted to marry her to Sisupal, an infidel King, but Rukminee had given herself up entirely to Sree Krishna.

What she (Rukminee) did, therefore, was to send a love-letter to Sree Krishna through a Brahmin messenger, promising the latter rich gifts if he would deliver the message to her lover. The Brahmin took that letter to Sree Krishna, who thereupon came and forcibly carried Rukminee away.

In the Srimat Bhagabat, where we find the above account, we also find the context of the letter of Rukminee to Sree Krishna, in seven couplets. Lord Nimai was in the green-room, utterly ignorant of what they were doing on the stage. Vashudev Acharjya was putting on him the garments and ornaments of a female, when, lo! the Lord Gauranga was converted into Rukminee! This came to be known to those present by his sayings and doings. What those present saw, was that he was writing, with his finger-nails, on the bare ground, with bent head, the very same seven couplets, which Rukminee, according to the Bhagabat, had addressed to Krishna. While he was writing the lines, he was also addressing the Brahmin who had carried Rukminee's letter, and who, he

* This shows that the number of those who seek salvation by meritorious work exceeds those who seek it by wisdom, or prem-bhakti. These many thousand consorts also show that the works are many, each consort or worshipper of Krishna, representing a variety of good work. Sree Krishna of Dwarka bestows earthly gifts, removes poverty, heals diseases &c &c. Sree Krishna of Mathura grants supernatural powers. Sree Krishna of Brindaban only loves and can be acquired by love,

fancied, stood before him. Of course, no Brahmin was there. Let us give a summary of the seven couplets which Rukminee addressed to Krishna.

Rukminee writes : "It is unbecoming of a girl like me to address you in the manner I am doing. Forgive my immodesty. But is there a maid in the universe who can resist Thy charms? Grant me this prayer, that I may lay my head at Thy lotus feet and thus secure the goal of human life.". Lord Nimai was writing the above couplets with a profusion of tears. Nay his tears washed away the writing, and he had to write the lines again and again. While writing, he was also addressing the imaginary Brahmin, who, he thought, was waiting to carry his letter to Sree Krishna, in these words :—"Go, Brahmin," says the Lord as Rukminee did to her Brahmin messenger, "Go, and tell Him all. You see my condition. I cannot write every thing in the compass of a short letter. Besides, I am a girl ; it is difficult for me to overcome my natural modesty and unburthen my heart.

"But tell Him that I am dying ; and that if what our sacred books say be true, that it is His nature to give protection to whomsoever seeks it at His lotus feet, then let Him come to take me away."

While the Lord was thus "raving," to use his own expression, as Rukminee in love with Sree Krishna, and Vashudev was dressing him in female attire, the flute which Advaita, as Sree Krishna, played, reached his ears. The result was immediate. The mood of the Lord changed, and he ceased to be Rukminee and was converted into Radha, pure and simple,—a thorough, complete, entire Radha.

The reader is here referred to the sport of Sree Krishna with Radha in Brindaban. Sree Krishna plays his flute from a secret bower in Brindaban and summons Radha there by name. None hears this sound except Radha ; and she, with her maids, hastens to meet the Lord. When, therefore, Advaita as Sree Krishna played

the flute, Lord Gauranga as Radha immediately responded to it. He said, addressing those who were with him and whom he, as Radha, fancied to be the maids of Radha: "There! there! listen to the bewitching flute of Sree Krishna: He is beckoning me. Hasten, friends, and follow me, such of you as care for the lotus feet of Sree Krishna. I have no choice in the matter—I am drawn to Him by an irresistible force. I must start, and cannot wait for any of you." Seeing that her maids were either indolent or not quite prepared to follow her with alacrity, she continued, this time with impatience: "But are you going or not? Leave your household or worldly duties for a moment, please; for, it is the Lord who calls us. Why hesitate? Are you afraid of scandal? Let, however, nobody follow me who is afraid of conventionalism and public opinion. Sree Krishna does not accept her, who is not prepared to rise superior to, and defy, public opinion, and forsake everything, however dear, for Him. How unreasonable of them! They will not undergo any sacrifice for my Lord Sree Krishna, and yet they expect He will be theirs!"

Saying this, Radha, as represented by Sree Gauranga, began her Abhishar, (*vide* Krishna Leela, Vol. 1, page XXV) or progress towards Sree Krishna in Brindaban. Gadadhar as Lalita, her chief maid, stood on her left, and Nitai as Barai stood on her right. Sreeman Pandit, of whom we have spoken before, held the light before him. Other maids also accompanied the procession, which was led by Sree Gauranga, who thus entered upon the stage.

Sree Gauranga's appearance on the stage dazzled the audience. The procession seemed to be made up of celestial beings. All the maids looked surpassingly beautiful, Gadadhar surpassing them all. But the Lord had promised to be the Mohinee, that is, "the enchantress," and he had really become so. His beauty bewitched both men and women.

For a time the audience was, as if spell-bound, hushed into silence. But when men and women had recovered their self-

possession they raised a joyous shout of welcome. Radha, as a Consort of Sree Krishna, represents the negative principle* in the God-head.

The Lord stood, therefore, representing Radha as adorned with all the noble virtues of womanhood in a supreme degree,—bashful, loving, guileless, divine, just as the Consort of Sree Krishna ought to be.

As soon as Radha and her attendants were seen to approach, Madhu Mangal suggested that they should all keep themselves concealed, and see what the damsels would do. This advice was accepted, and Sree Krishna, with his friends, sought a hiding-place behind a number of flower bushes.

Radha (Lord Nimai).—Friend Lalita! We have brought ever thing for the purpose of worshipping Siva, excepting flowers which we have omitted to bring lest they should wither on the way.

Lalita (Gadadhar).—What of that? In Brindaban there is certainly no want of flowers.

Radha.—Yes, there is no want of flowers, but I have to tarry to gather them. I am sorely afraid of the wild asses which roam about here.

Madhu Mangal (aside to Sree Krishna).—Friend! do you hear how impertinent these damsels are?

Sree Krishna.—I do not understand you.

Madhu Mangal.—You don't understand me? That is but natural, for, you are the dullest Being in the Universe. Otherwise why, being the Lord of the Universe, should you come here to attend upon cows? Don't you understand that these uncivil lasses call us, your followers, wild asses? I do not like this at all. Who

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* The expression "negative principle" does not adequately explain Radha. She may be described as the living embodiment of all that is loveliest in God's creation. But lest it should bring her down to the level of humanity, the Sinha at Bhagabat describes Her as "God's reflex-self," the *purest* and *fairest* Being, representing *love* in *nature*.

are these wild asses but we who follow you? We, your followers, have a particular objection to being called asses.

Radha (to Lalita).—Let us go to pluck flowers from the *lavanga* creepers.

Barai (to Radha).—Grand-daughter, don't do it, for, you may fall into the hands of Sree Krishna. Don't you know that that fickle youth is devotedly fond of the flowers of that creeper?

Lalita.—Well, if our friend (Radha) falls into the hands of Sree Krishna, we shall procure her release by keeping you as her security.

Thus they amused themselves, while plucking flowers. Just then a honey-bee began to hover round the face of Radha, no doubt, mistaking it for a sweet-scented flower, while Radha tried to protect herself from its attack with her right hand.

Radha.—Lalita, help me, I am in distress, the bee annoys me very much.

Lalita.—If you are in danger, call Sree Krishna, for, it is He alone that can afford protection to the distressed. (Radha blushed.)

Madhu Mangal (to Sree Krishna).—Friend, here is an opportunity for you to appear on the scene; for, you are summoned, though indirectly. But who dare summon you directly? *

Sree Krishna.—Friend, you are a fool to offer such an advice. Don't you see that from this place of concealment I am able to devour the beauty of Radha? I don't choose to disturb the scene and deprive myself of that pleasure. Mark! how the annoyance, which the bee is causing her, has increased her loveliness, a hundredfold? If I now appear before her, all this lovely sight will be lost to me. Yet, I think, the fright which my sudden appearance may give her, will impart to her face an added loveliness.

So saying, Sree Krishna appears on the scene.

Sree Krishna (to Lalita).—Who are you, please? That you are women, is clear; but what surprises me, is the want of maidenly

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* A good deal of philosophy is concealed in this sentiment.

bashfulness and timidity in your deportment; you have guileless faces, no doubt, but you are too bold for maidens. Besides, your conduct is far from being respectable. What right have you to pluck flowers here? Who gave you permission? You are plucking flowers, trampling the bushes under foot, as if you were the owners of the property; wait, I must teach you a lesson for mischief and trespass.

Barai.—Krishna, Thou wert ever a fickle youth, and Thy sense of justice is always a mystery to us, poor mortals. Who made Thee the Lord of Brindaban? Brindaban is as much ours as Thine.

Madhu Mangal.—Look here, old woman, you are in your dotage. It is your duty to offer good advice to the young maidens and prevent trespass, instead of which you are encouraging them.

Barai.—Yes, I am old and you are a baby. But though you be a Brahmin, your intellect is not higher than that of a mouse.

Lalita (to Madhu Mangal.)—You old donkey, who called you here? What business have you to interfere in such matters?

Madhu Mangal.—Don't you know that I am a Brahmin of eminent position? The Lord of Brindaban is Sree Krishna, and I am His minister and priest.

Barai.—Krishna, this Brindaban belongs to the Gopees. But if you really covet these flowers, you will gain nothing by quarrelling about them. Listen to my advice. Be humble, beg Radha for her flowers, and she may condescend to give you some.

Saying this, Barai forcibly made Radha throw the flowers, she had plucked, upon the person of Sree Krishna.

Radha, faintly smiling, blushed, and said, addressing Barai: "My good lady, what have you done? I plucked these flowers to worship Siva with, and look! to what a wretched use you have applied them."

Barai.—Let us go home ; they are the stronger here, and there is no chance of a fair battle.

Radha.—We came to worship Siva ; how can we go back without performing that sacred duty ?

Madhu Mangal.—But you can't expect to go back free. You entered Brindaban, you must pay *dan* (toll).

Barai.—Toll ? What toll ? Who imposed it ?

A cow-boy.—Don't you know that the Lord of Brindaban is Sree Krishna, and that it is His decree that whoever comes here must pay his fee ?

They had thus a fight which lasted for some time, when Sree Krishna stood face to face with blushing Radha.

Sree Krishna (to Radha).—Give toll, for, you owe it to me.

Radha.—I am absolutely poor.

Sree Krishna.—Then give thyself.*

Just then Barai stepped between Sree Krishna and Radha, as if to protect the latter ; but Sree Krishna pushed her away, and attempted to touch Sree Radha. An extraordinary incident was, however, the result.

Hitherto Sree Krishna Himself, with His Consort Radha, her attendants and servants, were giving the audience present at Chandra Shekhar's, through those who were taking part in the representation, a glimpse of a part of the Krishna Leela (the *dan*). At last Sree Krishna and Radha confronted each other. That was an inexpressibly holy scene. None but the holiest of the holy could witness it, and, the audience, who had assembled at Chandra Shekhar's, were not worthy to behold it. That being so, just as Radha and Krishna stood face to face, all those who had come down from Goloke, Sree Krishna, Radha and others, disappeared !

And who remained ?

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*The reader is referred to Krishna Leela, Vol. I., page XXV.

It must be borne in mind that Sree Krishna Himself had made use of the person of Advaita, Radha that of Lord Nimai, Barai of Nityananda, Lalita of Gadadhar, etc. Thus when Sree Krishna and Radha approached one another, Sree Krishna left Advaita, and Advaita, pure and simple, remained ; Barai left, and there remained Nityananda, etc., etc. Hitherto all these bhaktas were acting under some unseen influence, which irresistibly led them to do and say things of which they had no previous conception whatever. When they were left free by Sree Krishna and other dwellers of Goloke, they stood, as if dazed and stupefied !

The *Chaitanya Chandrodaya* explains how all this happened. Here is a free translation of the lines in that book, which referred to the above incident :—

"Mere dress could not completely effect the transformation as was done on that occasion. Of course, Advaita had the dress of Sree Krishna, but that could have never made him resemble the real Sree Krishna. It was because Sree Krishna Himself had entered his body that this complete transformation was effected in the old man, so that he looked like the real Krishna. And when Sree Krishna left his body, though the previous disguise remained, still it could be seen through it that he was no other than Advaita. Thus when heat enters cold water, the water becomes hot, and when the heat leaves it, the water becomes cold again. It was Sree Krishna, Radha and others who came to utilize the bodies of those who were enacting the *dan-leela*, and thus succeeded in giving the character of absolute reality to the whole thing."

The *dan* is that Leela of Krishna which was first dramatised by the Lord in his own way, for the purpose of pointing out to mankind a very excellent way of acquiring Prem and Bhakti. Other Leelas were dramatised subsequently by his bhaktas. The effect of these dramatic representations of the Krishna Leela

upon the audience, is indescribable. To be *en rapport* with God, is a difficult feat for most men. Sree Krishna is brought on the stage face to face with the audience. He is endowed with human feelings, and thus sweetened to suit the palate of His creatures, who are men and who can only appreciate emotions which influence the human mind. Of course, diverse objections could be raised to this practice. It could be said that to bring God on the stage, is to belittle Him.* But those who have once enjoyed the privilege of witnessing such representations, will think otherwise. When the Krishna Leela is properly dramatised and acted, the effect is irresistible both upon non-believers and believers. We understand that the Christians have their "Passion play", which is similar to the one described above : and I have been assured that it produces wonderful effect upon those who witness it.

The above book, the *Chaitanya Chandrodaya*, was written more than three hundred and fifty years ago, and it explains the *danleelā* performed by the Lord and his *bhaktas* in a manner which confirms the philosophy of possession, mentioned in all religious books of the different races inhabiting the earth. The philosophy is this that men live after death ; and that these men, notwithstanding that they are apparently dead, can communicate with the living by means of some individuals who are sensitive and susceptible to such influences. Howitt in his "History of the Supernatural" has shewn that every religion, and divisions and sub-divisions of religion, in the world, is founded upon what is called possession.

Now as man is immortal, he is more interested in securing a better future, or, in other words, in making his soul better fitted to accommodate itself to life in other spheres, than in securing any possession on this earth, where he has to live only for a tempo-

* If God is as big as the universe, He is also smaller in size than man, or He could never have created the creatures revealed to us by the microscope.

rary period. Those who have reached the other spheres, can realize this truth better than men of this, engrossed, as they are, with their own affairs; and they, of the other spheres, therefore, whenever they can, try to impress this fact upon their fellow-beings who are in this mundane sphere. It was in this manner, says William Howitt, that all the religions, and divisions and subdivisions of religion, on this earth, were founded. Thus a good man, in the spirit-land, finds his fellow-beings on earth forgetful of their true interests, living like animals, and engrossed with worldly affairs. He finds in Wesley a proper man to receive his influences. Wesley feels that he is beside himself, and forced to carry out a mission of spiritualizing his brethren. He is backed by a force from above, and, therefore, finds himself strong enough to be able to make conversions. And thus Wesleyans became a sect of Christians.

The reader is referred to Howitt's book on this subject, in which he himself, a very good Christian, has, after much toil and research, proved that there is no religion on this earth, which is not based upon what he calls the supernatural.

But to proceed. Every one was freed of his influence except the Lord Himself. He entered the stage as Radha, the Beloved Consort of Sree Krishna of Brindaban; now he remained Radha, no doubt, but as the Mother of the Universe. As Radha of Brindaban, she is beloved of Krishna, and, therefore, the beloved of the Gopees, and those devotees who worship Him through the Gopees. But as the negative half of the Creator, Radha is the Mother of all the Universe.

Whether the face of the Lord then assumed a matronly appearance or whether he impressed the fact mysteriously upon their hearts, all those present felt towards the female figure before them as if she were their mother, and the mother whom they had lost. Moreover, they felt themselves as children and forgot that they were all grown-up men. There is a time in every man's life when

the heart yearns after his mother ; it is when he is an infant and has not yet arrived at boyhood. This love which all of them had forgotten, now returned to them with irresistible force. "Mother, mother, where art thou ?—" cried they, and surrounded the female figure of the Lord.

The female figure, then, surrounded by her children, entered the worship-house of Chandra Shekhar, and sat upon the cushion of God as the Mother of the Universe, who is styled Durga or Devi or Bhagabati. There the figure sat and intently watched the faces of those who surrounded Her as a doting mother would gaze upon her children. She then seized Haridas, who was nearest, as a mother would her child, and took him in her lap as easily and as naturally as a mother would take her one-year old child.

Haridas, of course, did not resist ; on the contrary, he felt that the more natural thing on his part was to go to the lap of the female figure, his mother. There he lay as a child would, while drawing milk from its mother. He felt himself secure in that lap and in peace with the Universe, and with himself.

Others, however, felt jealous of Haridas ; or, in other words, wanted to be similarly blessed. And as children implore the mother to be taken into her lap, all those who surrounded the Lord, feeling just then as children would do and that the figure before them was their mother, began to be importunate. "Mother, take me into thy lap," cried one, and another and another. Others caught hold of her *saree* to attract her attention, and some wanted to enter her lap, without permission, and by force.

In the above scene, the Lord presented to his bhaktas the picture of God as mother. When God is worshipped by Prem and Bhakti, He can be regarded as a father or a mother or a master. The feeling of a son for his mother or father or kind master cannot be love, pure and simple ; nor is it Bhakti ; it is a mixture of both.

Christians worship God as Father; Hindus call Him likewise Father, and sometimes Mother. Thus Siva is Father and Durga or Bhagabati is Mother. But the feeling of a son for his father is not love; it does not adequately represent the feeling which binds the soul to its great Partner. That feeling which God, rather the Loving, the Personal, and the Beautiful God Sree Krishna evokes in the hearts of men, can only be likened to that of a woman who is in love. A woman, who is in love, will forsake her children, husband, position, nay, brave scandal, to possess her beloved. It is just the same with a soul which has fallen in love with Krishna. During the *Rash leela* of the Gopees, when they heard the sound of the flute, they ran to Sree Krishna, some throwing down their children whom they were suckling, some forsaking their husbands whom they were tending, and some abandoning other household duties in which they were engaged. Their guardians and relations obstructed their passage, reasoned with them, threatened and implored them in turn; but they would not listen to any advice or succumb to any threats or importunity. Well, this is the way a man feels when in love with Krishna, and the Lord showed it practically by his own example.

The Lord sat as the Mother God in the cushioned seat meant for Him, in the worship-house of Chandra Shekhar.*

The female figure was suckling Haridas. After a while, she left him and took up another. Haridas, satisfied, began to dance in ecstatic delight. She then took up another and another, and in this manner she satisfied them all. They all felt as children (though Advaita was seventy-six), and began to dance, after

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* Here the Lord gave an indirect sanction to the worship of God as Mother, as the Shaktas do in India. But the highest love, the conjugal, cannot be developed if God is worshipped as Mother. In Sree Krishna, the devotee will find an object for the development of all the four kinds of love referred to in the beginning, *viz.*, conjugal, filial, fraternal, etc.

clasping one another's hands, round and round the mother. The beautiful matron, who sat upon the *dais*, looked upon her children with beaming eyes, glistening with love. Indeed, the sight melted every one, including the Mother Herself.

The above spectacle was presented to the bhaktas for the benefit of those who were in favour of worshipping God as Mother or as Father. To worship God as a lover, as the Gopees did, is not within the capacity of all men. To worship God as a mother, is far easier.

In the midst of the ecstatic dance of the bhaktas round the mother, they were disturbed by the appearance of the sun. The bright luminary had appeared for some time, but the court-yard was covered over with canopies; and engrossed, as they were, the bhaktas had not perceived that day had already begun. The appearance of day-light, however, as it were, broke the charm, and they suddenly found themselves as if roused from an indescribably pleasant dream. They gazed at each other with stupefaction; and then realizing the scene, they burst into tears. They wept because they again found themselves on earth, and not in the celestial regions where hitherto they had thought themselves to be.

The Lord left the house of Chandra Shekhar, but he left behind him wonderful evidence of his presence and of the dramatic performance.

This is what Murari Gupta, an eye-witness, says in his notes in Sanskrit:

श्रीचन्द्रशेखराचार्य्यरत्नवाट्यां महाप्रभुः ।
ननर्त्त यत्र तत्रासीत्तेजस्तु महदद्भुतं ॥
सप्ताहं शीतलं चन्द्रतेजसा सदृशं हरिं ।
चञ्चलेव सुदुष्प्रेक्ष्यं चित्तह्लादकरं शुचिम् ॥
ये ये तत्रागता लोका ऊचुस्तत्र कथं दृशोः ।
उन्मीलने न शक्ताः स्म विद्युद्वत् प्रेक्ष्य भूतले ॥

A free translation of the above is as follows :—When the Lord left the house of Chandra Shekhar, he left behind him in the house a cool luminosity which resembled the rays of the moon. This light remained in the house for seven days and nights continuously, and then gradually disappeared. The light looked like electricity as if the lightning of the heaven was playing upon earth. Its effect upon the eyes was such that no one could open them when under its influence.

This is what the *Chaitanya Bhagabat* says, written under the auspices of Nityananda and Sreebas, both of whom took part in the play :

सप्त दिन श्रीआचार्य्यरत्नेर मन्दिरे ।
परम अद्भुत तेज छिल निरन्तरे ॥
चन्द्र सूर्य्य विदुग्रत् एकत्र येन ज्वले ।
देखये सुकृति सव महाकुतूहले ॥
यतेक आइसे लोक आचार्य्येर घरे ।
चत्तु मेलिवारे शक्ति केह नाहि धरे ॥
लोके वले कि कारणे आचार्य्येर घरे ।
दुइ चत्तु मेलिते फुटिया येन पड़े ॥

The above can be translated thus : (In the house of Chandra Shekhar after the Lord had left it); there shone a light continuously for seven days and nights. The light seemed to be composed of the mingled rays of the sun and moon combined with electricity. Those who came to the said house found that they could not open their eyes. And whoever entered, exclaimed : " How is it that in this house when one attempts to open his eyes. he cannot do so, for the attempt makes him feel that they would burst ? "

Says the *Chaitanya Mangal,* written under the auspices of Narahari, the constant companion of the Lord. We give only

a free translation: "In the house of Chandra Shekhar a light shone continuously for seven days and nights, so that it seemed to be always day there, and never night. When the Lord left the house he left behind him some luminosity which gave the idea of innumerable moons shining there. The light was cool, and seemed to be electric in its origin, and it imparted gladness to the heart. Its effect upon the eyes were that they could not be opened when in its midst."

There cannot be any manner of doubt about this luminosity, or whatever you choose to call it, that the Lord left behind him. For, incidents like this could not possibly be invented.

It is this dramatic representation which led Advaita to leave Nadia in a huff, an account of which, and how the Lord dwelt with him, have been already described in Chapter I.

CHAPTER III.

DISTURBING ELEMENT.

During the dramatic performance, the door was kept locked; indeed, even when the first Kirtans of the Lord were held in the house of Sreebas, no outsider was permitted to enter the place. The reason, it seems, was that any disturbing element either retarded, stopped, or polluted the flow of bhakti that a Kirtan has the power of evoking. Perhaps perfect harmony is essential for the success of a Kirtan. Indeed, it sometimes happened that outsiders succeeded in entering the place of the Kirtan at Sreebas'. A very good man once persuaded Sreebas to allow him to see what a Kirtan was like. Sreebas knew the man, and he thought that the Lord would not object to the presence of such a pious man as he knew the applicant for admission to be. But it so happened that the Lord, as soon as he had commenced dancing, stopped, and said: "How is it, I don't get the necessary ecstacy for a dance?" Then he looked at Sreebas, and inquired: "Pundit, is it possible you have admitted a stranger?" Sreebas immediately knelt at the feet of the Lord and confessed to having admitted one without permission. In extenuation of his offence he explained that the man, he had admitted, was known to be very pure and religious, and that he lived entirely upon milk. It must be borne in mind that religious men in India not only eschewed meat and drink, but sometimes bread and rice. The Lord smiled and said: "Let your good man go elsewhere. This is no place for men who

want to attain to the lotus feet of God by living upon liquid diet!" The poor man was then expelled.

But the sight that the man had seen, had already given him a re-birth. He did not mind the expulsion: on the other hand, he left the place in an ecstacy of joy, for, previously he had not the living faith which he acquired by witnessing the Kirtan, and coming in contact with the Lord. He entered only as a pure man; he was leaving the place as a full believer in the Lord. But he had not proceeded more than a few steps when he was summoned to return. He came back and fell at the feet of the Lord, asking forgiveness for having entered without permission and soliciting his blessing. The Lord said that he knew that he was a bhakta, and he had been expelled only to convey a lesson to his friends, namely, to teach them that the good Lord is not to be acquired by any external act,* such as living upon any particular diet.

When the Lord inaugurated Kirtan he had to do it with closed doors, mainly for two reasons. First, as it was altogether a novel way of worshipping, there was a chance of the party, engaged in this sort of worship, being maltreated by an unsympathetic public; secondly, there could be no realization without concentration, and concentration in the presence of an unsympathetic and discordant element, would be difficult. This concentration is called yoga or union,—union of the human soul with the Great Soul, its origin. It is for this reason that those who aspire to attain to that most difficult state by yoga, have to go to wilderness for the purpose. In a Kirtan this concentration of the mind can be very well secured even in the midst of men, but they must be sympathetic and pious companions. The music soothes the soul; the wavering mind is brought into a focus; and the devotee, with a little effort, succeeds in diverting it to the Lotus Feet. It will be thus seen why the Lord was so strict in the beginning, in

* In India, this lesson was exceedingly necessary.

not allowing unsympathetic out-siders to join or witness his Kirtan parties.

When the Lord came from Gya he was in a state of abstraction. When he reached Nadia, he was voted a mad man by his adversaries. He was then completely under the control of some outside influence. Step by step he gained an ascendency over this influence, and he succeeded at last in bringing it under complete subjugation. The Lord was in the beginning incomprehensible and unapproachable ; but in the end he became a good companion, who was found to behave like other men, when in his human condition. True, when the Lord God revealed Himself in Nimai, his bhaktas found themselves debarred from all intimate intercourse with their master. But on the Lord resuming his human state, they again approached him, found in him a sweet companion, and almost forgot in his delightful presence that it was He, who had a little before revealed Himself to them as God Almighty.

When he had thus been able to bring the influence completely under subjugation, a change came to be perceived in the attitude of the Lord, which affected him gradually, slowly though surely. I said that Nimai taught his companions, by personal example, how to attain to God by bhakti. The bhaktas by imitating him, eventually came face to face with Sree Krishna. At last the time arrived for him to teach prem, and the change in him indicated this, though his companions knew it not. He became again more meditative, less talkative and more abstracted. He, day by day, ceased to attend the Kirtan ; he almost avoided the company of his friends, and shewed an extreme desire to remain alone. Ordinary fevers last for eight days ; but in a serious case, the fever, instead of being relieved after the seventh day, may increase on the eighth. So when the Lord was gradually attaining to his natural state, he was overtaken by another and more powerful influence. We shall now shew how this came about.

He refused to speak even about Krishna ; he ceased to attend Kirtan parties. He ate, slept, bathed and walked about like other people, but all in a state of complete abstraction. His bhaktas had, therefore, always to keep guard over him. When he went to bathe in the river, he was thus guarded by his bhaktas ; when he sat to dinner, his bhaktas had to sit by him to persuade him to eat his dinner. They did not venture to ask him any questions ; neither did the Lord volunteer any information to them. It sometimes was evident that an inexpressible anguish was gnawing at his heart and that he was making ceaseless efforts to conceal what it was. But the mood changed often. Sometimes a celestial joy brightened up his chiselled countenance, which showered gladness on those who had the good fortune of being near him.

His silence was now and then interrupted by sobs, followed by copious tears ; and if Shachee asked him to explain the cause of his sorrow, she would get no answer. It was then evident that he was utterly beside himself and that his heart had been "stolen" by another. Gradually, the flow of his tears increased so that

Whether in the town or out of it,
Tears ceaselessly began to course down his cheeks.

—*Chaitanya Bhagabat.*

But although the earnest questions of his friends and mother did not rouse him from his reverie, yet the name of Hari or Sree Krishna had a powerful effect upon him. If the name of Sree Krishna was uttered in his hearing, he would either give vent to his grief in loud cries or fall down into a death-like swoon. Indeed, while one day he was coming home from the bathing ghat, a boy, not actually from mischievous intent, but for the purpose of seeing the fun, uttered the name of Hari loudly. The effect upon the Lord was instantaneous : he fell down as if dead. He had to be carried home by his bhaktas.

Believing that Nimai was in his normal state, Shachee ventured to ask, "what is the matter with thee, Nimai?" But she got no reply, or if she got one, it was short, and not always to the purpose. Thus even in his normal state, it was difficult to wean him from the deep abstraction which kept him enchained ceaselessly within himself.

The usual performance of the daily Kirtan was not, however, stopped, though the Lord was not in a condition to join it always. Previously the Lord has been the master of the Kirtan; his place was now taken by Advaita, at the request of the Lord himself. The Lord was in his house one day, surrounded by some of his most intimate bhaktas. It was morning; yet the Kirtan party at Sreebas', which was led by Advaita, had not broken up. Usually this was done before dawn. But on that day, Advaita had been so much moved by the Kirtan that he was not willing to stop it. The sun rose, but still Advaita was not willing to stop. Indeed, he had almost gone mad over the Kirtan, and was sometimes seen rolling on the ground in the anguish of his soul, and sometimes falling down in a fainting fit. It could then be seen that it was not joy that was moving him, but intense misery. But what was it? This could be guessed from his exclamations, for, he fervently prayed to the Lord as a penitent, in words like these: "Forgive me, My Lord," "Forgive my unbelief." "How happy are they who can believe!" "Wilt Thou, my Lord, never grant me faith?" And so forth

When it was nearing noon, Advaita tried to calm his feelings by mighty efforts, and apparently succeeded. He then asked his companions to proceed to the bathing-place, and promised to follow them after a few moments' rest. So they all left him on the raised verandah, where he sat as a picture of utter despair, covered with dust, and his eyes red from the frequent flowing of tears. But the feeling came upon him again, and while ejaculating "my Lord, save me," he fell down to the yard from the verandah. Now, this was at Sreebas' house.

The Lord was at this moment sitting alone in his own verandah, his bhaktas having gone to bathe. He was sitting alone in a state of complete abstraction, utterly unconscious of his surroundings. But in a mysterious way, the sound of distress, uttered by Advaita, entered his ears, and he at once regained his self-possession. He ran with the speed of lightning to Sreebas' house to meet Advaita, and offer him the protection he was asking for!

He reached the house of Sreebas and saw Advaita rolling on the yard in the anguish of his soul. The Lord sat by him, touched his head and thus announced his presence. Their eyes met. Those of Advaita betokened unutterable anguish and despair. In answer, those of the Lord infused hope and courage. "What ails thee? Here am I in response to thy call; ask what thou wilt," said the Lord. Advaita arose but remained silent, not knowing how to answer the question of the Lord. "Tell me what is it that you want. I thought you had got all that you wanted," said the Lord again. Advaita mustered sufficient courage to say: "Give me faith. I cannot yet prevail upon myself to cling to Thee. My faith in Thee goes and comes of its own accord. Much as I wish to cling to Thee, my mind does not obey me. And that is the cause of my misery. While Thy other bhaktas are sporting joyously in the ocean of faith, I am being tossed about and pestered by doubts which force themselves into my heart."

The Lord mournfully gazed at him, and then slowly observed: "Can you suggest any means by which you think you would be satisfied?" Advaita immediately said: "Yes, I have thought of it, shew Yourself to me in the form of Vishvarup."

In that wonderful book, the *Geeta*, Sree Krishna explains and Arjuna listens. In that book, it is said, that to Arjuna He shewed the form of Vishvarup, that is to say, His form as the Universal God—the God Who created the universe out of Himself, the God Who pervades all space. To say that the Vaishnavas worship

Radha-Krishna because they have no idea of the grandeur of the Being Who created us, is wrong. They know very well that God is as large as the universe ; but that knowledge helps them very little in attaining to His lotus feet, but rather casts them away from Him. To convince Arjuna of this, Sree Krishna assumed the form of the Universal God. He, Arjuna, saw before him a Being Whose eyes were innumerable, Whose heads were innumerable, Whose hands were innumerable, Whose feet were innumerable, and the like. He saw that the Being before him had no beginning and no end. Arjuna began to tremble with fear, and he felt a faintness coming over him. Though he knew that he had nothing to apprehend from the Figure before him, and that the Being, Who was exhibiting Himself in this frightful form, was a friend, still he could not bear to see the sight. He shut his eyes and prâyed to Sree Krishna to assume the form of man so that he could again regard Him as à friend.

Now, in this incident, a part of the basis of Vaishnavism is explained. If the companionship of God is sought, you must worship Him as a man. In any other form, He will not be able to excite any tender feelings for Him in the minds of men.

Advaita wanted to see the Vishvarup of God, because he felt that unless Pundit Nimai be God Almighty Himself, he would never be able to appear in the form which dazzled the eyes of Arjuna. It is needless to state here that when Nimai appeared before Advaita, he was in his Divine state. So when Advaita made the suggestion, He said, "very well, come into the Puja-house of Sreebas,"—the house in which He had first revealed Himself to Sreebas. They both entered the Puja-house, and the door was shut. Though Advaita kept his eyes open, he, however, saw that the body of Nimai was undergoing a change. It began to increase in dimensions, and Advaita saw with dismay that the process was getting more and more painful

to observe. Seeing this, the Lord, to re-assure him, loudly called upon him to "look." He began to repeat, "Look!" "Look!" "Don't get frightened," as His body increased in dimensions. This the Lord had to do because a faintness was coming over Advaita, and it was necessary that he should be kept in a conscious state. Just at this moment Nitai, who had gone to bathe, appeared at the door. Not finding the Lord at his own home, he had come to Sreebas', expecting to find the Lord there. He, however, found none there, but heard the Lord loudly calling upon Advaita "to look" from within the Puja-house, the door of which was shut. He knocked at the door, and the Lord permitted him to enter. Nitai came and saw the form of Vishvarup! Nitai felt as if he would fall down in a swoon then and there, and the Lord at once withdrew His mightiness and appeared before him in his usual lovely form. Advaita's despair was supplanted by indescribable ecstacy, and he held the hand of Nitai, and they both began to dance in their joy.

The Lord went home in a state of abstraction, and remained so. Gadadhar, Narahari and his other constant companions kept guard over him day and night. This change in the mood of the Lord meant that he was entering upon a new state of existence. The influence entered into him and he instinctively resisted it; yet day by day it was gaining ground on him. Now he was completely under the influence, now he overcame it; and in this manner he was led into that condition which it was necessary for him to attain to, in order that he might teach prem to mankind. How he arrived at that state step by step, is vividly described by his companions. Indeed, the Lord was converting himself into Radha, pure and simple, to give mankind a personal experience of her love for Sree Krishna.

Will the reader please bring to his mind the Krishna-Leela? That must be remembered to understand what follows. Radha went to Jamuna to wash herself. Seeing Krishna there, she was

smitten with love, and came home a changed person. The Lord, when coming from Gaya, had seen and been embraced by Krishna, and he thus won his attraction for Him and taught bhakti. When that was accomplished, indeed, when he had almost arrived at his normal state, he commenced the other—the greater—work of teaching prem to mankind.

The Lord saw Krishna again, and was smitten as Radha was. One day he went to the river to bathe, and he saw Krishna, leaning against a Kadamba tree, as a Youth of dazzling beauty with a flute in hand. The sight of Sree Krishna took away his self-consciousness at once. He then came to regard himself as Radha ; in other words, he became Radha. He altogether forgot that he was Pundit Nimai, the son of Shachee,—that consciousness was altogether lost to him. The idea *entirely* took possession of his mind that he was himself Radha who had gone to wash herself in the Jamuna and had seen Sree Krishna. There were flower-gardens on the bank, and it all took the shape of Brindaban to him, and the Ganges was similarly converted into the Jamuna. Thus he, as Radha, saw Krishna, flute in hand, in Brindaban on the bank of the Jamuna.

When the Lord saw Sree Krishna, he was as hopelessly smitten as Radha had been. But he was then Radha, a lady, and it would not do for a lady to stare at a man ; so he regretfully left Krishna behind, and came home, of course, taking advantage of every opportunity to have another and yet another look at him. Thus he came back home, transformed into Radha, and sat on his verandah !

His companions came and saw that the Lord had either fled or retired within himself ; they came to feel at every step that he was no longer the same individual that he was before. The reader will understand the situation when he comes to feel that they regarded him as Pundit Nimai, whilst he himself had forgotten the very existence of that individual and regarded

himself as Radha of Brindaban. So he and his companions could not understand one another, and therefore could not agree. The companions expected the Lord to speak, act and think as Nimai Pundit would have done. The Lord did not recognise his companions, for, he was Radha in Brindaban, in love with Krishna ; and he sought to find in the companions the maids, who attended Radha.

It took a good deal of time for the Lord to attain to this stage. Even when he had completely converted himself into Radha, his companions did not understand him. They watched his proceedings closely, and at last they made the discovery that their Lord had fled, leaving Radha behind. So Narahari inquires in his song :* "What is the matter with the Lord?" And at last he suggests the answer himself. Says he : "It seems that the Lord was betraying all the symptoms of love that Radha had betrayed for Sree Krishna."

Narahari had no other business except to attend on the Lord, his whole soul was absorbed in him, and the Lord was therefore subjected to his rigid inspection. What he saw, he describes in his songs. Says he : "What is the matter with the Lord ? His gold-hued body is besmeared with dust. Alas ! he looks so sad. And then he sighs in agony, thereby audibly revealing the sorrow of his heart, which he tries to conceal. He utters loud lamentations and strikes his breast, and his tears wet, not only his body, but all his clothes."

"What is it that ails him?" Thus Narahari thinks and puts his thoughts into a song. Narahari again essays to describe the condition of the Lord. Now it must be always kept in mind that the description is not only minute but that of an eye-witness, who is closely watching the Lord. Narahari in another song again asks a question of his companions. Here is the translation of that song :

* Narahari has left a good many songs, describing the Leela of the Lord.

"Can you tell me what is the matter with the Lord? Why has he flung himself prostrate on the floor, weeping the while? Now he gets up and says, 'Oh, my Lord Hari! Thou hast made me mad.' And then the Lord raises up his long arms, and complains to the Creator for having filled him with love for a Being with whom union is impossible."

In the song, literally translated, the description is not expressive. What Narahari means, is this: "The Lord addresses the Creator, and says, 'why hast Thou given me love for Krishna, since to possess Him is impossible? See, He has taken away all my senses, and I have become perfectly mad.'"

Of course, the Lord did not tell them that he had become Radha; he told them nothing. But they discovered the fact by his actions and by the words that he muttered now and then. In the following song by Narahari, the condition of the Lord is graphically described:

"My Lord Gauranga is utterly unconscious of the external world. Indeed, he cannot distinguish night from day. Now he laughs, why nobody can say. Now he asks of everybody: 'Where is my beloved Krishna?' Now he is seized by a shivering, now he tries to fly to his beloved. Now he asks of everyone, 'will you lead me to the lord of my life?' Now he dances in joy: but the mood changes, and he shuts his eyes and weeps with the ejaculation, 'Oh, my beloved!' Thinks Narahari: My Lord betrays the love which Radha felt for Sree Krishna."

Thus the discovery was made. Says Narahari again: "The Lord muttered—'what business had I to fall in love with Krishna? Surely I shall plunge into the Jamuna and put an end of myself.'" Now this language could only be used by Radha, and so they were able to understand the nature of the influence which had taken possession of the Lord. The Lord oftentimes mistook his companions for the maids of Radha. Thus he

would address Purushottam, one of his dearest bhaktas, by the name of Lalita, the chief maid of Radha. He would address him thus: "Lalita, do please dress me; for, my Lord Krishna is expected to come to me to-night." And Purushottam and others at once divined that it was not the Lord who was speaking, but Radha herself.

I shall explain the significance of this Leela in a word. Love (prem) and Bhakti are the two means of attaining to Sree Krishna. But how to love Sree Krishna? The answer is, 'do as Radha did.' For, Radha not only loved Krishna, but her love for Him transcends all human love and can never be rivalled by that of any other being. And why? Because, Radha is only a part of Him, representing the love that exists in nature. But Radha is a myth, says the sceptical devotee, and if not a myth, it is impossible to love Krishna, at least to feel any thing like the love which, it is alleged, she bore for Him. Besides, no one knows what is the nature of the love that Radha felt for Sree Krishna. Well, the Lord became Radha to shew mankind the nature of her love for, and how she loved, Sree Krishna. Of course, the love which the Lord, as Radha, showed for Krishna is beyond the power of man to feel or imitate; yet what the devotee has to do, is to earn any portion of the feeling of Radha that he can, and thus approach Sree Krishna.

Do you, dear devotee, think Radha to be a myth? But the Lord Nimai is not a myth. What matters if we reject the Krishna-Leela altogether? Certainly, we need a Radha to show us her love for Sree Krishna, so that we may learn from her how to love Him. But since we find her in the Lord, it is not of any moment whether the Radha of Brindaban existed or not. The Lord as Radha was not an actor; he did not *imitate* the sobs of the bereaved Radha, nor her voice, nor her possible actions. There are actors who can act the part of another in a wonderful manner, but yet they must always fall short of the

reality. Assume that Radha did live and assume also that she could manifest herself fully through the Lord, and you will understand the significance of this Leela,—what is meant by the Lord becoming Radha.

So we get a Radha in the Lord, and as for God, He is certainly not a myth. We get then Radha and the God of love, whom, let us call Sree Krishna. When the companions of the Lord found that the Lord had become Radha, it was then that they could realize with wonder, not only the intensity of her love for Krishna, but of the power of the feeling itself called Love. Previously, they had no conception that one could love another with so much ardour, devotion and disinterestedness, and much less when that Being was God. When they thus saw in the Lord a living picture of Radha, they naturally began to realize what love for Sree Krishna meant.

Thus, the Lord taught mankind by example how Radha loved Sree Krishna,—a feat which was never before performed and which, we believe, it is impossible for a mere man to accomplish. Says Bashu Ghose: "If the Lord Nimai had not appeared, who would have given mankind an idea of what real Love was, and of the intensity of the love of Radha for Sree Krishna? Where is the being with the power to do it?"

The Lord recovered his lucid moments now and then; and then he seemed to have awakened from a dream. On such occasions, he would ask, "was I dreaming?" or, "did I rave?" Sometimes he would say, "what an hallucination! I felt that I was Radha." But these lucid moments were again followed by a complete transformation, when, as Radha, he would show such an intense hankering after Krishna as the wildest of lovers had never felt for his or her beloved. And when he felt that Krishna was not with him, he expressed such an anguish of the soul as had never been betrayed by the fondest of mothers at the death of her only son, or the fondest of wives at the death of her

husband. For the sake of Krishna, either in joy when he thought He was with him, or in sorrow when he felt that He was not with him, he died "a hundred deaths" every day. That is to say, he fell into death-like swoons repeatedly, one coming after another in rapid succession, either in the excess of his joy or of his sorrow. On some occasions these swoons carried him away almost to the gate of death, for, he lay unconscious for hours, nay, days, without any sign of life in him whatever. Heaven willing, I shall do my best to give some idea as to how he behaved as Radha, and how he taught mankind the extent of Radha's love for Sree Krishna, as I proceed.

In short, he did as Radha is alleged to have done, as ascribed to her in the *Sreemat Bhagabat.* Thus, he felt the *Purbarag* of Radha (*vide* Krishna-Leela, Vol. I, page XXIV); he made his *Basak-sajya* as Radha did; he went through the *Dan-leela*, and at last, as Radha, performed the *Rash-leela* with all his bhaktas. He did more: he shewed much more than was ever conceived by the author of that great book, *Sreemat Bhagabat.* As the other half of the Divine Pair, he passed through all the experiences which ardent lovers are supposed to do in their lovely dealings with one another, and many, which lovers had never conceived before.

Sree Krishna, after he had sported with Radha in Brindaban, went to Mathura, leaving Radha disconsolate. Then Radha passed her days and nights in anguish, the pangs of separation carried her almost to the brink of death. The Lord, after performing all the Leelas enumerated above, from *Purbarag* to *Rash*, at last arrived at that stage of Radha when she was separated from Krishna. In this condition of bereaved Radha, he remained for a considerable time; indeed, it may be said that he passed almost all his life on this earth in that state.

"Where is my Krishna?" "Who has stolen my Krishna from me?" "Where is the friend who will bring back my Krishna to me?" "How can I live without Him?" "The world is

dreary to me without Him." "Who will be so good as to take a message from me, His forlorn servant, to Him?" With these and similar ejaculations he passed his days and sleepless nights. He sighed, sobbed and wept, and when overpowered, he fell down in a swoon. The sight of the moon gives him a shudder. He addresses the moon: "Why do you torment me? My Krishna is not with me." He sees a beautiful flower and feels as if he had been shot with an arrow. "Thou beautiful thing," he addresses the flower, "what art thou but a torment to me? For, Krishna has forsaken me. Go to him who has Krishna, and therefore the inclination to enjoy your excellence." He sits on the bank of the Ganges, which he fancies to be the Jamuna, and he is thus led to feel that Mathura is on the other side where Krishna is. He sits gazing intently on the other bank, expecting to see Krishna, if by chance he comes by that way. Then he clasps the neck of a companion and weeps bitterly. "My friend," says he, "my Krishna is good. He cannot bear to see the misery of others. I know Him very well. If it could but be made known to Him that I was dying by inches for Him, He would surely run to my breast."

Sometimes he would take offence at Krishna's unfeeling conduct. "Thou hast stolen my heart," says he, addressing Krishna, "and now that I am helpless, Thou forsakest me. Is this worthy of Thee? People call Thee merciful, but, the fact is Thou hast no heart, and I was a fool to deliver myself up to Thee." Then he would remember that he had spoken disrespectfully of Krishna, and he would fall on his knees and exclaim: "Pardon, pardon me, my Krishna, I know not what I say. Thy absence has made me lose my senses."

It was thus he spent his days and nights, relieved by repeated fainting fits and copious tears. Shachee, Vishnupriya and his friends, all passed their days in the deepest anguish and misery possible. They knew not what to do. They tried to rouse him

to consciousness and adopted various means for that purpose. Vishnupriya sits by him, and talks to him words of love. Shachee weeps and begs of her son to take pity on her ; but, all to no purpose,—he could never be roused to consciousness. But what everybody failed to do, was at last partially accomplished by a trifling, and rather a ludicrous, incident.

Krishnananda was a fellow-student of the Lord's in the Grammer *tole* of Gangadas. He, after completing his education, became the leader of the Tantriks, and acquired the title of Agamvagees. The Tantra is a mixture of occultism and religion, and thousands and thousands of books have been written on the subject and are yet extant. Many valuable things are to be found in them, though there is much also that is not only nonsense but horrible, at least apparently so. If Raghunath, in the absence of Sarbabhaum, was the first man in Nyaya in Nadia or properly in the whole of India, Krishnananda was the first man in India in Tantra. Of course, he and the Lord could never agree. Much of what he, or rather the Tantra, advocated, was an abomination to the religion that the Lord taught. Besides, the black Tantras preached, at least apparently, the necessity of the drinking of liquor and other bestialities for the purpose of salvation. Krishnananda and the Lord had never met, that is to say, after the latter had revealed himself. But the former had, of course, heard of the Lord and treated him, his followers and his doctrines, with supreme contempt. One day he took into his head to pay a visit to the Lord, and to have, if possible, a debate with him about the innovations that he was preaching.

So he boldly entered the house of the Lord in a spirit of defiance. He found that the Lord was sitting in the verandah, surrounded by a large number of his bhaktas. This was lucky, thought Krishnananda, for, he would be able thus to annihilate Nimai Pandit in the presence of his stupid followers. But there were some in-

superable difficulties in the way of a polemical discussion, for, the Lord would not fight and could not be made to fight. For, he was then Radha, deeply contemplating the beautiful figure of his Beloved in his heart, forgetful of the presence of his bhaktas and surroundings. When Krishnananda looked at the face of the Lord, he was staggered. He had seen the aggressive Nimai Pundit of former days ; but now his guileless face and gentle look at once disarmed his pugnacious spirit. Indeed, the face of the Lord seemed to him so innocent and the look of the Lord so pathetic, that, in pity he gave up the idea of a discussion, and in its stead, wanted to give the deluded young man some sound advice. He addressed the Lord. Of course, it was not expected that the Lord would listen to him, or give any reply to his questions ; but, wonder of wonders, he did on this occasion. Yet there was some confusion. For, Krishnananda addressed the Lord as he would do Pundit Nimai of Nadia, whilst the Lord replied as Radha of Brindaban! The Lord fancied that Krishnananda was a servant of Krishna in Mathura ; and as he, as Radha, had been led to entertain a particular dislike for everybody and everything in connection with that place, which had stolen and enchained his Krishna, the Lord replied to him in disgust. Said the Lord : " Return thou from here to thy Master. I am resolved never to follow in the wake of Krishna. Has He sent you to take me ? I am surely not going. He is heartless and cruel." Now Krishnananda had, of course, no idea that the Lord was speaking as Radha, and he found, in what he considered the blasphemy of the Lord, an opportunity of showing his own superiority before the company, and giving the Lord some advice. He said : " Pundit ! Fie ! it is blasphemy that you are talking. Don't talk of Krishna in that disrespectful way."

The Lord was not then in an amiable mood with Krishnananda. He had a particular dislike for the people of Mathura who had robbed him of his Beloved; and Krishnananda was a man of that place, who could not possibly have any good motive in coming

there. In short, the Lord lost his temper, and in anger, snatched a stick that was near and rose with this threat to Krishnananda : "Get thee away or I shall compel thee."

When Krishnananda saw that Nimai, a young man of twenty-four, of herculean proportions, was trying to assault him with a big stick, he, an intellectual man, who had never in his life perhaps handled a lethal weapon, thought that his last days had arrived. And with a shriek, and a loud call for help, he ran for his life, without even looking behind to see whether he was being followed or not. He reached home running and found himself in the midst of his followers. There, while out of breath, he had to give an immediate explanation to all, of the sad plight in which he was found. He gave a description of all that had happened, and then ended by declaring that he owed his life solely to his having fled precipitately !

Neither Krishnananda nor his disciples had any high opinion of, or good feeling for, the Lord. But hitherto they had found no trace of any opportunity of giving vent to their spite against him. But here was one, and they were in high spirits. "So he has become a god,—the fellow whom we saw the other day starving for want of food !" said one. Said another : "Let us put an end to his frolics. Let us give him a good thrashing, a sound one." And they all liked the proposal immensely ; indeed, at that moment at least they seriously contemplated of offering violence to the person of the Lord.

A section of the people felt a spite towards the Lord. All good beings have their enemies. Those whom people find unapproachably high, those who are without a blemish and beyond reach, and those who, from obscurity, suddenly rise into prominence, incur the ill-will of a portion of their fellows. The Lord was perfect; he was worshipped as the Lord God; his house was full of the best things in the town, with which his bhaktas supplied him without stint ; and thus he was an object of envy. When he walked abroad, he looked like a prince ; and some

people very naturally hated him. So, if Krishnananda had actually succeeded in offering violence to the Lord, there were many who would have been glad.

Let us now come to the Lord. When he rose to run after Krishnananda, stick in hand, the bhaktas sought to hold him back ; but just then he was roused by the shriek of the Tantrik Pundit. This shriek jarred upon the ears of the Lord, gave a rude shock to his nerves, and lo ! it roused him into consciousness. The run of Krishnananda in a fright and his shriek, brought the Lord back to his normal state, which all the efforts of his dear ones had hitherto failed to accomplish. Having regained consciousness, he hastily flung away the stick, and looked around him in confusion. Said he : "What is this mad act I have committed just now?" He realized at once all that had happened, and an inexpressible anguish darkened his lovely face. He sat down,—a picture of sorrow.*

He sat as Nimai Pundit, penitent for the act that he had been led to do under the influence which had completely mastered him. The bhaktas could see that he had regained consciousness ; his look and everything about him showed it. But he said nothing, nor did the bhaktas venture to utter any word of consolation. It was a new experience to the Lord ; he had never before felt like it, for, he had never done before one wrong act for which he had been led to feel sorry. He felt he had done

* It must be borne in mind that the object of the Lord was to show what Radha's love was really like. He could have done it by precepts, but that the Sreemat Bhagabat had done, though in a faint way. He wanted to show it by example. This he could have done by acting the part of Radha, but that would have never made so permanent an impression as his becoming the real Radha made. To secure that end, he had to become Radha and destroy his own identity completely. So he behaved, just as Radha would have done, under the very circumstance, in his thoughts, deeds, and sayings.

wrong, and it could be seen by his bhaktas that the thought was gnawing at his heart. And thus he remained, as if stupefied, for a time.

After a while he rose and proceeded on his way, the bhaktas following him. If he proceeded on without a word, so did his companions. He sat on the bank of the Ganges, and his companions sat surrounding him. The Lord was thinking ; an idea was working in his mind ; but what was it ? Suddenly he burst into a loud laugh !

The bhaktas were startled. The sound and the scene startled them, for, they had never before heard the Lord laugh in that way. His laugh and smile generally dispensed gladness around him, but there was nothing sweet in that laugh ; on the contrary, it showed a deep-seated sorrow. That was a laughter which betrayed the anguish of his heart.

The Lord stopped, and then muttered : " The remedy has proved worse than the disease." He said this to himself, for, though he was then perfectly conscious, yet so deep was the nature of the feeling that was working in his mind, that he had no knowledge of the presence of his companions. After a while, he rose, and came home—silent though conscious, sorry though undemonstrative. And in this manner, in a state of deep remorse and maintaining utter silence all the while, he passed several days.

" What did the Lord mean by that,—the remedy proved worse than the disease ?"—asked one bhakta of another. No one could say definitely what the Lord meant. But Mukunda attempted an explanation. He said : " That means that the Lord will forsake us." " That cannot be," said all. " For we cannot survive his separation, and it is not possible that he, who loves us so well, will kill us." " Don't be too sure," rejoined Mukunda, " he is greater by far than men. His ways must be mysterious. Don't you remember what he said when he performed the miracle

at the death of Sreebas' son, that his heart was rent at the prospect of parting with such noble company? There is no doubt that he will forsake us, to serve a great and unknown purpose." They felt stunned by the thought.

But the Lord himself had a private talk with Nitai. "Sreepad," said the Lord, addressing Nityananda, thus suddenly breaking the silence of days, "have you heard of what they are contemplating in the town? It is to give me a thrashing. Have you not heard of it?" Nitai bent his head in sorrow, for, he had heard of it, but gave no reply. "Yes, I know what they contemplate," continued the Lord, "nay, I know also the party who are in the conspiracy. Advise me what I am to do now." Nitai could give no reply. The Lord continued, "Listen to the project I have formed in my mind to meet them. I will renounce society and be a Sannyasee, and beg alms at the door of those who now bear ill-will towards me. That will surely disarm them. And then they will not only forget their ill-feelings towards me, but will also accept Harinam." Nitai could see that the Lord was not merely throwing out a suggestion, but giving expression to a deliberate opinion and deliberate resolution which he had formed. His face became pale with anxiety and sorrow. He stammered out: "Lord, don't leave us. Those who think of offering violence to your sacred person, are brutes. Think of us, and think of your mother. If you forsake us, every one of your followers will surely die of a broken heart."

The Lord replied: "Do not blame those who do not like my ways. I live a life of luxury; I have beautiful garments, excellent dishes, nay, everything which makes life enjoyable. Human nature is such that man will never take Harinam, that is to say, accept salvation from a man who lives a life of luxury. Yet I lived the life of a householder, for two reasons. One was, I had to show that an innocent life of enjoyment is not incompatible with the culture of prem and

bhakti.* The other was, that as no one has been so well-served as I have been by my friends, it would have been ungrateful on my part to leave them abruptly and thus make them miserable. So I was looking for an opportunity, like the one that has luckily presented itself, in order to show you that, to accomplish my mission, I must leave society. I lived like a householder to please you and my mother, the result of which, you see, is that some people have not accepted Harinam. Now, dear Sreepad, counsel me what I am to do. Shall I, to please you, remain in society, or give you the great pain of renouncing society and save those who would not otherwise accept Harinam from me?"

Nitai remained silent,—he could make no reply. He knew that what the Lord proposed he himself would do, if that was necessary to save men. He knew also that he would accompany the Lord wherever he would go. But the thought of the Lord becoming a houseless wanderer, a mendicant with a piece of rag round his loins, broke his heart. But he felt more for Shachee and Vishnupriya. He, however, kept the secret to himself but wept incessantly days and nights alone.

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* This is a lesson which the Hindus needed very much. The idea, that torments upon the body would please God, had a strong hold upon most men. We believe the idea is not confined to India.

CHAPTER IV.

KRISHNA-BIRAHA.

EARLY in the morning, a day or two after the incident referred to in the last chapter, the Lord began to lament for Krishna in the manner he was used to do as Radha bereaved. On this occasion he was doing it, however, in a state of self-consciousness. Now, it is impossible to describe, by mere language, the heart-rending spectacle that the Lord presented to those who surrounded him. His pathetic voice; his face which betokened unutterable misery; the short ejaculations that escaped his lips, led the bhaktas to weep with him loudly. And what did he say? This was how he unburthened his heart: "I have borne enough. No more, no more, shall I bear the absence of Krishna." "I must go to Krishna, I must have Him." "He is merciful, why should He not grant my heart's earnest desire?" "I want only a sight, a sight of Him." "Shall I never see Him?" He also addressed Krishna directly: "Thou art good. Oh my beloved, Thou art sweet. It is thus my heart hankers after Thee. Show Thyself to me or I shall die. Have pity, have pity, my beloved." He rolled on the dust in the anguish of his soul, and Gadadhar sought to raise him. He rose,—but to fly to his Krishna! He said, "do not detain me, I go to my Krishna," and tried to go, but he fell down in a swoon.*

* To second-class bhaktas Sree Krishna of Brindaban is only an emblem; to first-class bhaktas, he is a reality. The Lord flourished as a man-god, and as

The bhaktas saw that there was something in the mind of the Lord; they knew that such pangs were due to Krishna-biraha;* they knew also that it was a feeling which scarcely ever left the Lord. On that day, however, they feared that the Lord had some special cause for his sorrow, and it would really break his heart. And they tried to soothe him by all means in their power. Swoon followed swoon, and he was roused with difficulty. Every one of these swoons carried him to the gate of death, and on each occasion the bhaktas feared that this fit would be the last!

Thus noon approached. The Lord, however, came to see that his bhaktas had become extremely miserable, and he tried to restrain himself. He leaned on Gadadhar and stretched his legs: his gold-hued body, hair and clothes covered with dust, his eyes red with the ceaseless flowing of tears, and his body shivering from excess of emotion. He beckoned his bhaktas to come near; they approached. The Lord wanted to say something, but the words choked him.

By an effort he found his speech, and he said in an attitude of submission: "Dear friends! This body of mine belongs to every one of you. You can sell it and dispose of it in any way you think fit. You have disinterestedly served me, followed me like a shadow and loved me with a fervour which has no parallel. Forgive me if I now leave you. I must now go, I must leave you to find my Krishna." The Lord was not sorry because of his own sorrows as a mendicant. He was sorry because his supposed sorrows, as a mendicant, would give his bhaktas pain; and so

a bhakta. He flourished as a model bhakta, for the benefit of humanity. To him Sree Krishna and Brindaban were realities, and therefore, he sought to fly to Brindaban, to find Krishna where the latter flourished. It will be seen that though the Lord tried to find Krishna in Brindaban near Mathura, he did not go there in the beginning, and sought to find Him elsewhere.

* If prem is love, biraha is the pang which is caused by separation from the beloved.

he addressed them in a tone of penitence, imploring them to forgive him.

As soon as he, however, uttered the name of Krishna, he found himself assailed by his feelings; but by a great effort he succeeded in keeping his senses clear. The bhaktas remained silent. The Lord continued : "The supreme object of life is the attainment of the lotus-feet of God. It is of no moment to us whether we live together or live separate, in a palace or in wilderness. My dear friends, worship Krishna in my absence. As for myself, I go for the common weal. As merchants go abroad to earn money, and when they come back, maintain their friends with the money thus earned ; in the same manner, I shall go out to earn Krishna-prem, and when I return, we shall divide it among us."

The announcement fell on the bhaktas like a thunderbolt. All, however, could not at once realize the full significance of the proposal. The bhaktas could at last see that the Lord was making a serious proposal to them, which was to let him leave society in search of Krishna. It affected the bhaktas in divers ways ; indeed, some even thought that the Lord was acting cruelly towards them. Sreebas angrily replied : "Let those, who can survive your separation, wait for the Krishna-prem. For myself I can tell you that I shall never survive it ; so, your words of consolation to me at least are useless."

Gadadhar never ventured to speak to the Lord. He obeyed his commands, and that was all. But he got bold at a time of peril. He said : "My Lord, we do not understand you. You mean to leave us, by which you mean that you wish to leave mother Shachee. I have no faith in that bhakti for Sree Krishna, which leads one to forsake his old mother,—a mother who has no one except yourself to console her."

This bold language from Gadadhar astonished all the other bhaktas, and, to speak the truth, also pleased them, and so they eagerly waited for the Lord's reply. The Lord looked at Gada-

dhar with reproachful eyes. Said he : "If you love me disinterestedly, you will comfort my mother when I am gone. By your words you aim a poisoned arrow at my heart. My greatest difficulty is my mother. As a friend, help me to overcome it. You know very well that I must leave you and that I cannot help it. You talk of my remaining with you. What will you do with me, pray ? My body is like an empty shell ; for, my soul has fled away to Krishna. I shall candidly explain to you my position. You know what fever is. The burning fire of Krishna-biraha has, like a severe fever, reduced all the desires in my heart to ashes. There is nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing in this world which can give me any pleasure except Krishna. Would you like to see me, whom you love so well, consumed by a slow fire ?"

Murari concluded that any proposal, based upon worldly considerations, would never move the Lord. So he adopted another plan. He said : "My Lord, you taught us, worldly men, how to cultivate bhakti. You planted the germ of bhakti in our hearts. Would you now destroy it by leaving us to ourselves ?" And then Haridas found speech. Indeed, the bhaktas, one by one, addressed the Lord, and tried to dissuade him from the momentous act of leaving society and them for ever. I have no space for all that they said. They wept, they reasoned, they implored, and they did all they could, in the anguish of their hearts, to move the heart of the Lord. It was Mukunda, however, who gave a new turn to the discussion. He eschewed argument, and, falling at the feet of the Lord with a shriek, delivered himself in the midst of sobs, which well-nigh choked him, thus : "You will forsake us, my Lord ! Is that possible ? The mere contemplation of such an event rends our hearts. How can we live without you,—our life, the life of our life ?" And Mukunda, having fallen at the feet of the Lord and thus unburthened himself, the whole company followed this example and began to give vent to their feelings by loud lamentations.

The Lord was very much moved, and for a moment he was so

confounded as not to know what to say. He implored them to listen to him with calmness. He said that they had given a very serious turn to a very trifling matter. If he left society, he would not leave them for good. If it was impossible for them to live without him, he too could not live without them. He was not leaving them then and there and for ever ; he would have other conversations on the subject with them. And in this manner the Lord tried to soothe his inconsolable bhaktas. Indeed the Lord smiled, and embraced every one of them in turn to show that the matter was not so serious a thing as they had taken it for.

In one of his songs Narahari describes how he was affected when he first came across the Lord. In the song, addressing a friend he says : "Sister,* when I came across Gora (another name of our Lord, Gora meaning the white-bodied), I became beside myself. For, I began not only to see him in my heart but also wherever I directed my glance. Indeed, the entire universe seemed to be filled with his lovely face. What is this disease that has overtaken me?"

Well, this disease is nothing else than one of the highest symptoms of love.† When one is filled with love he is sometimes overtaken by the symptoms described by

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* Those who worship God in the wake of Radha, that is to say, with prem, pose themselves as females. For they attend Radha, and none but females, of course, can do it. Here the saying of the female saint, Mirabai, may be remembered. She said, " every one in the universe is a female, the male being Krishna alone."—(*Vide* Vol. I, page XL.)

† The symptoms, that attend one who is in love, were not accurately known before the Lord appeared. Very few people, if ever any, know what true love is. The only being who ever tasted love in perfection, was Lord Nimai, in his love for Krishna. His love for Krishna produced symptoms in him which have been kept on record by his bhaktas. The same symptoms would follow in the case of every one in love, of course, according to the intensity of his feeling, though the object may be a human being. Indeed, a man who has once loved, is saved, though the object may not be Krishna.

Narahari, that is to say, he sees his beloved everywhere. Narahari only describes the feelings that the bhaktas generally entertained for the Lord. Indeed, they had come to love the Lord almost as Radha loved Krishna. They had forgotten everything they held dear,—wife, children, wealth, worldly prospects, even their own existence, in their love for the Lord. They could not do without him for a moment, and live without him. They could neither think nor talk of any one else. Indeed, the Lord had taken entire possession of their hearts. Everything in him appeared sweet to them. And the pleasure of being with him, compensated completely for the sacrifices that they had been led to make for him. They adored his person, his smile, his limbs, his movements, nay, loved him from "the sole of his foot to the crown of his head." This tyrant of their hearts was now going to forsake them, and they felt that their existence would become unbearable without him.

The Lord himself felt similarly. If they all loved him intensely, so, in his turn, he loved them dearly. Indeed, as regards love, every one got more than he gave, because he, the Lord, had a greater capacity for loving than they.

The Lord, to console his bhaktas, began to see every one privately at his house. When Nimai goes to a bhakta's house privately, the latter feels gratified and flattered; he feels as if he has obtained the highest object of his ambition. The master sits by him, talks to him, embraces him, and, in this manner, takes affectionate leave of him. He clasps the neck of the bhakta and weeps with him. He unburthens his heart to each of them: "I must go, the sufferings of humanity rend my heart. And you

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The Sreemat Bhagabat only knew of eight such symptoms, but the Lord showed in his person many more than eight. One of these symptoms is to see the beloved wherever the one, stricken by love, casts his or her glance. It was from the way the Lord betrayed his love for Krishna that a science was founded called the *Rasa-shastra* or "the science of emotions," *viz.*, Prem and Bhakti.

must help me." To some others he would say: "The absence of Krishna has made my life unhappy. I cannot live without Him. I must go to find Him. Forgive me, if I give you pain by leaving you." And the bhakta is so persuaded by the earnestness of the Lord that he thinks he ought to allow the Lord to go, and that if his separation from the Lord is a keen suffering to him, it is also a blessing, for, it means the salvation of mankind and happiness to the Lord.

Since the second change in the mood of the Lord, Shachee had not enjoyed a moment's happiness. She had not forgotten the wound that her eldest son had left in her breast. Would Nimai follow him? This thought was a source of constant anguish to her. She regained her natural cheerfulness when she saw that her son had overcome the influence under which he laboured on his return from Gaya. She saw that thousands loved her son and her son loved them in return, as also that he loved Kirtan passionately. She had, therefore, come to assure herself that her son would never leave such devoted company and such fine Kirtan. But the new influence which had taken possession of the Lord again threw her into despair.

She sent for her younger sister, the wife of Chandra Shekhar. "Sister," said she when she had come, "the condition of Nimai gives me uneasiness. Will he also leave me as his elder did? Whenever he sees a holy man, he talks to him with great earnestness. Indeed, the other day that renowned Sannyasee of Katwa, Keshava Bharati, came to Nadia, and Nimai brought him here and held a private conversation with him for some time, and the spectacle gave me a fright."

"Why that should give you a fright, I do not see," said the sister. "He is a holy man and it is natural that Nimai should associate with him." Shachee replied: "You do not see, sister, that Bishvarup has left a lesson for me behind him. Whenever I see a Sannyasee in Nadia, the apprehension seizes me that he has

come to take my Nimai away. Who and what is to assure me that Nimai will not forsake me?" The sister suggested that she should ask her son direct, and she was sure he would conceal nothing from her. Shachee would have done so, but she had not the requisite courage. Luckily Nimai just then appeared before them, and seeing his mother and his aunt, he, with great reverence, prostrated himself before them.

Shachee mustered courage and addressed her son. "Nimai," said she, "will you give a frank reply to a question from me?" Nimai said, "of course, mother." Shachee pondered,—she was framing a question. She said, "you know I cannot bear your absence for a moment. Will you leave me?" Nimai took some time to reflect, before answering the question. He then looked his mother tenderly in the face and replied, "yes, mother, I have an intention of going to a holy place. But don't get alarmed. I will never go anywhere without your permission. And if I am ever permitted to go, I shall come back to salute you."

Dear reader, here do not fail to take note of the courage of our Master. A son like him would be a Sannyasee with the free permission of a mother like his, with only one child, and who is in the sixty-seventh year of her age!

"You promise this, Nimai?" asked Shachee. "Yes, I promise," replied the Lord. Shachee was assured; and she felt extremely happy. She knew that her son would never break a promise, and she believed that on her part she would never give him permission to go.

Such an open conversation between mother and son had never taken place since the return of the latter from Gaya. It gave her intense satisfaction, and reminded her of a trick that she had played upon her son. She said with a voice of penitence: "Nimai, will you forgive me? I have done you a wrong."

Nimai expressed horror at the idea of a mother asking for-

giveness of her son. He said: "It is impossible that any act of yours towards me can be wrong. Tell me mother what it is."

Shachee replied: "Your brother, Visvarup, left a book with me to be delivered over to you when you had grown up—," saying this, she stopped. The Lord immediately felt a lively interest in the conversation, and eagerly asked the lady to give him the book. Shachee continued the discourse with an effort. "A few days after handing over to me the book, he left home and society. I thought that education had opened his eyes and led him to realize the worthlessness of everything worldly and to leave us. Besides, he one day in a dream tempted you to follow in his wake. I took alarm and thought that I must not permit you to read the book, and therefore threw it into fire."

A shade of disappointment passed through the face of the Lord. But he recovered his good humour immediately. He said: "Mother, you were led by your motherly feeling for me to do it; never mind," and he left the old lady.

This happiness of the lady, however, did not last for any length of time. For, the rueful face of the bhaktas kept her in a constant state of alarm, nay, some of them even went to the length of telling her that she should try to keep her son at home, as he contemplated leaving Nadia. This they did from the best of motives. They thought that, if any one could detain him, it was the old lady, the mother of the Lord. Of course, Shachee had the promise of her son, but yet she found in her heart of hearts, that she was again getting more and more unhappy day by day.

Again mother and son met, a few days after the last meeting, for a talk. Shachee opened the conversation. She said: "Nimai, you told me that you intended to go to a holy place. When do you go and where is the holy place?"

The time had come for the Lord to reveal his intentions to his mother. He replied: "The dearest object of my life is to

go to Brindaban—." No sooner had the Lord pronounced the word than he had to stop,—he was choked by his emotion! Shachee was alarmed, lest her son would fall down in a swoon from the excess of his feelings; but he recovered. "Mother," continued he with exceeding earnestness, "I promised that I would never leave you without your permission. Will you not allow me to go?"

Shachee replied to the question by another: "Nimai, what is this that people say in whispers about you? Do not deceive me." The question visibly moved the Lord, and the old lady could easily see that she had nothing agreeable to expect in reply from her son. For he looked tenderly in her face, and his eyes were filled with tears which he tried to suppress.

Nimai, however, partially conquered his feelings and said: "Mother, listen! You nourished me in your womb; you suckled me when a baby; you fed me when a boy, and educated me as a father would have done. Mother, every pore of my body belongs to you. It is now my duty to devote all my energies for the purpose of making the rest of your life happy, as far as that is possible. Is that not so, mother?"

Shachee felt that the thunderbolt was coming and her face showed extreme anxiety. She, however, could not say anything in reply.

The Lord continued: "Yes, my duty is to serve you and not Sree Krishna. But He is proving towards me stronger than yourself. Mother, I cannot help it. People have sometimes unworthy and ungrateful children, also children who are useless to them, either because they are blind or sickly. Mother, I am like one of them. My duty towards you remains unfulfilled, my huge debt to you remains unpaid. I can no longer remain in society. I must go out in search of Krishna. I cannot pay the debt I owe you by any effort of mine. Release me from it, and show to the

world what a mother's disinterested love is capable of accomplishing."

"That is to say, you want to be a Sannyasee like your brother," asked Shachee. "Deal frankly with me."

"Yes, mother," replied Nimai.

"And you want my permission?"

"Yes, mother," replied Nimai.

"A free permission, of course?" rejoined Shachee.

"Certainly, mother," said Nimai.

"That is impossible, my beloved son. If you want permission for form's sake, I will, of course, accord it to oblige you; for, I have never denied you anything. But a free or hearty permission is impossible,—nature will not permit it; for, I am a mother, I have no one else besides you, I am old, and I love you at least as other mothers love their children."

The strong-minded lady did not break out into lamentations or fall into a swoon, nor did she meet the Lord with an outburst, but remained firm as a rock, apparently unmoved, and for once in her life, she ventured to speak face to face with her irresistible child.

The Lord looked with admiration and tenderness on his mother. He suppressed the tears that rushed into his eyes,—he suppressed the tender feelings that sought to choke him. Mother and son gazed at each other for some time, when Shachee again broke the silence by discharging, at her son, a barbed arrow in the shape of a question, which was, "And Vishnupriya?"

The Lord felt himself for a moment like a guilty man before his mother. The shaft had done its work; the name of Vishnupriya led him to hang down his head in thought. He replied, "Mother, if I go I shall go with her permission. And more, I shall leave her in holy joy. Of course, she will pine, but she will have the consolation that I leave her only to discharge a sacred duty that I owe to Krishna. Yes, hers will be a life of suffering, from a worldly point of view, but mine will be worse."

Shachee interrupted Nimai with these words: "And you will leave that poor forsaken girl to me round my neck like 'a garland of misery' to torment me as long as I live? Nimai, you have become a saint. But is it the duty of a holy man to forsake mother and wife? Nimai, your love for mankind knows no bounds. Their misery literally breaks your heart. That is not only what the world says, but I have seen too often to forget it. Why are you then so cruel to your mother and wife, who are also human beings?"

If the Lord, as a son, could have obtained the leave of his mother for such a purpose, it would have cast a reflection on her parental affection. He was, therefore, pleased to find that he, as a son, had no chance with his mother. Thus he had to adopt another method to secure his object.

The son merged into the teacher, and the Lord assumed an attitude which was high above the reach of humanity. He said: "Mother, you have at last reached the point to which I was leading you. Who will forgive my offences cheerfully but those who bear disinterested love for me, if I use them ill? My sympathy for men is, no doubt, one of the reasons which take me away from you. I speak freely with you because you are mine and I am yours. You will, as I said, bear all my offences towards you with cheerfulness. Mother! I am going to perform a holy duty; you, who love me the most, ought to be the most ardent in offering me help. It would grieve me to think that you were throwing obstacles in the way of your son performing a holy duty. Mother, bear in mind that the attainment of Sree Krishna is the object of every human being. To obtain Him is the sole object of existence. To win Him is alone happiness, while not to enjoy Him is misery. The misery from which worldly men suffer, is delusion. What are earthly miseries to a man who has Sree Krishna? Do, mother, worship Him and He will not only console you, but make you happy. It is He

who brings loving hearts together, and it is He who parts them. Knowing that He is good, merciful, nay, loving, let us submit not only resignedly, but cheerfully to His dictates. I go not willingly. I go because He takes me away, no doubt, for an object of His. You trust me thus far, that I go from a sense of duty, and you must help me. Dear mother, think of Krishna and be superior to these petty worldly considerations, and give me leave to depart. For, you know I cannot go without your leave, freely given."

The above few words were spoken in a manner which it is impossible to describe. It was a privilege possessed by the Lord alone of being able to give tangible shape to his sentiments. His sentiments, therefore, always proved irresistible to those whom he addressed. Indeed, when they were uttered, Shachee realized vividly that the ground that the Lord had taken was unassailable She at once found that she was getting, as usual, helpless before her son. She felt that resistance would be useless, nay, that she would not be able to offer resistance much longer. The first announcement of the Lord that he wanted leave, had acted like a thunderbolt and stunned her. She gradually realized the situation, and tears now filled her eyes. She said : "Nimai, I have been expecting all this. Vishvarup prepared me for this final catastrophe. My supreme happiness warned me that this could not last. A poor bereaved widow, I suddenly found myself the proud mother of a son whom the world worshipped. No, I mistake ; that was not the cause of my happiness. My cause of happiness was your love. Had ever any mother such a son? Besides, I have no fear about salvation; your mother must be sure of it. I thought of all this, and then the idea, how unworthy I was for all this happiness, rushed into my mind. Yes, yes, you must go. I know, an unworthy woman like me must not enjoy continual happiness, when men and women around me are so miserable. But, Nimai, I live in you ; I cannot

bear your separation for a moment: tell me how can I live without you? No, no; here I talk of myself. I must suffer. Yet I had an ambition. It was that you would live as a householder and that your children would surround me, and that I would tend them. All that is dream now, never to be fulfilled! But Nimai, you have been tenderly nursed; you are always under the influence of prem, so that others have to feed you and tend you. How will you manage alone in wilderness? The soles of your feet are as soft as the *sirish* flower; how will you be able to walk bare-footed? And Nimai, you will now, with a piece of rag round your loins and a medicant's bag on your shoulder, beg from door to door for a handful of rice, and when exhausted, sleep on the bare ground, under the shade of trees, in heat and cold, in storm and rain! See, Nimai, I have thought out all these in the imagination, and you ask me to let you go freely to lead the life of a Sannyasee. Could any mother do so?"

Shachee proceeded, and the Lord did not interrupt her; and, at last, overpowered by her miseries, she began to talk incoherently. Nimai then caught her in his arms, embraced her, and said with deep emotion: "Mother! what is this? If you take it so ill, I will not go. You know I cannot go without your free permission."

Shachee.—"Oh, no, I give you permission, since you say it is the will of Krishna; but it would be speaking a lie to tell you that I was capable of giving you free leave."

Nimai.—"Mother, do you think it possible that I have any choice in the matter? Who does not naturally wish to remain at home with his friends? But the moment I attempt to think of it, I feel my heart bursting with an irresistible feeling which urges me to leave home. No, mother, it is not in my power to stay,—to stay is to die. I can't stay and live, that is, believe me, mother, my precise condition. Besides, I must find Sree Krishna; I must search for Him in every corner of the world. I am sure

to find him in Brindaban—." Here the idea of finding Sree Krishna in Brindaban so affected the Lord, that he could not proceed any further, and he sat down and wept, utterly overcome.

Shachee sprinkled water on his face, gently called him by his name, and awoke him to consciousness. Nimai, when conscious, recollected the business before him, and, with some effort, continued the discourse with indescribable pathos. "Mother," he said, "the world is full of misery because they have forgotten God. The will of Krishna is that I should proclaim Him and His goodness to mankind. For this I must travel from door to door as a mendicant. Many will never accept Krishna at the hands of a man, endowed with worldly prosperity. In this manner, Sree Krishna will remove the miseries of men. What do you say? Shall I do it, or remain with you?"

It is stated in the *Chaitanya Mangal* that, at this stage, the Lord imparted to his mother wisdom, so that she could realize all the circumstances of the case. This sudden influx of *gyan* (wisdom) opened her eyes, and she felt that she had been so long acting like a silly woman. Was not the Lord God anxious to save mankind? And could it be proper that she, a mere worm, should try to obstruct such an act of divine mercy? And would she be able to do it? She felt just then that there was only one loving Father, and that all were His children, and that He was only trying to draw them towards Him. She at that moment not only felt an irresistible bhakti for God, but also sympathy for all His children. And she was filled with holy joy so that tears of ecstacy began to course down her cheeks. She then found herself high above all human feelings.

She said: "Nimai, yes, I see it. It is all right," and her voice showed that she was drunk with joy. "You must go, and I was a fool to throw obstacles in your way. Go, my son, spread bhakti and save the creatures who crawl on this earth. I remember now what I had forgot, that you are the same Krishna

who is the Life of all created beings. Lucky am I that you chose me for your mother. It pleased you to call me mother for some time; it now pleases you to be the Teacher, to save all your children. Happy is the destiny of man! Go, son, I give you free permission, nay, rejoice that you should go."

A divine smile brightened up the countenance of the Lord as he heard his mother. He looked at her with a most tender and approving look, and said slowly, "yes, mother, to-day you have made Sree Krishna your debtor."

Wisdom (*gyan*) had conquered her maternal feelings for a moment; but when she had spoken the word, she realized what she had done, and the maternal feeling again obtained ascendency over her. She fell down in the agony of her sorrow, and began to roll on the ground, exclaiming, "Oh Nimai, my darling Nimai, your cruel mother is driving you away from home."

Says the *Chaitanya Mangal*, the Lord imparted wisdom to her mother for the purpose of securing the permission from her; for, Shachee could have never, without being enlightened by wisdom, given her son a free permission to leave home. When this permission was obtained, the Lord withdrew the wisdom from her, and allowed the maternal feelings again to take possession of her heart.

Was it right, it may be asked here, was it not something like cheating her, to extort her permission by imparting her *gyan* for a moment, and then withdrawing it? Besides, why did the Lord withdraw the *gyan* which made his mother so happy? And why did he return her the feelings which unnerved her and made her, for the moment, the most miserable woman on earth?

The chroniclers of the Leela of the Lord reply thus: which would you prefer, gyan or prem? The Lord certainly preferred prem, and so he gave it back to his mother.* By gyan Shachee

* A Greek philosopher proposed that as human flesh had been proved to be wholesome food, the better course for men would be to eat their dead parents

came to see that she was only one of the innumerable beings who were all tending towards a loving father. She then almost forgot her relationship with her son. By her wisdom she had lost her son, for, she realized that Nimai was the Father of all, and not one particularly her own. By prem she got exclusive possession of her son Nimai,—a deserving object of love. If Shachee had been asked whether she would accept wisdom, which would make Nimai an object of indifference to her, and therefore, save her from the pangs of separation for him, or she would have Nimai for her son and along with it the pangs of separation, she would have assuredly preferred the latter alternative. Of course, the joys of prem brought along with them the sufferings of bereavement; but then, if one must have the ecstacy he ought to have also the suffering. Prem and bereavement are inseparable; wherever there is one, there is the other. Besides, there is no bereavement whatsoever in the world. For, wherever there is an attraction, there must be an ultimate union. Bereavement must, therefore, always be temporary. After all, without separation love is never nourished. Drops of separation water the tree of love; separation is necessary for the growth of prem. Death unites and not separates. By giving Shachee the pangs of separation, the Lord not only returned back her son to her, but enhanced her love for him, or, in other words, her Krishna-prem, which is the highest blessing of God to man.

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than to bury them. From the point of view of a man of gyan, the philosopher is perfectly right. A man of gyan crushes all those tender feelings which make men so sweet and beautiful. Yet these tender feelings are the sources of most of our miseries. To crush these tender feelings out of the mind, is emasculation, and the process brutalizes the victim. A man who has not married and has no children, has not much of the miseries of the ordinary householder, but he has also no joys of life.

When Shachee began to roll on the ground, giving vent to her sorrows by short ejaculations, Nimai tried to soothe her, gently stroking her head. The Lord wept, and said: "Mother, this expression of sorrow is a reflection against Krishna. Remember, that you suffer in the merciful work of Krishna. And mother, is it proper that you should weep in my name? Better weep in the name of Krishna, for, then you will not lose Him, and if you do not lose Him, you lose nothing, certainly not me. *

Shachee here gave vent to her sorrows by loud lamentations. "Was there ever a mother like me," said she, "to drive a dutiful and loving son into the wilderness?" "Mother," intervened the Lord, "I assure you, it is Krishna who made you give me permission. Dear mother, console yourself. I am not presently running away from you. I am conscious, I have given you, as a son, very little happiness. I promise, henceforth, as long as I live in the house, to behave just as a householder, pure and simple, should do." The Lord then caught hold of the hand of his mother and said with indescribable pathos: "Mother! I promise this. Whenever you feel an ardent desire to see me, I will come to soothe you, and you will see me in your heart. Further, I take charge of your body and soul. As for that poor thing, Vishnupriya, whom I have to forsake, teach her to worship Krishna and He will soothe her. That is my request to you; for, she is very young and needs your blessings. And she will, likewise, see me whenever she ardently wishes to do so."

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* A tear, according to our Master, is misspent which is not shed for Sree Krishna. One of the main reasons, which enabled the Lord to take a free leave of his friends and relations, was that those in Nadia, who followed him, had then been purged out of all impurities, enabling them to undergo unparalleled sacrifices for Krishna.

CHAPTER V.

VISHNUPRIYA AT HER FATHER'S.

From that moment the Lord became a householder, pious, charitable, hospitable; good to every one. He bade, as it were, all influences to leave him for the moment, and they left him like obedient servants. He ate, slept and behaved like other people, though he could never suppress the unattainable piety, the bewitching sweetness and the irresistible magnetism which marked him from others. The Lord had taken free permission of his mother to leave society; but another obstacle yet remained in his way,—his wife, Vishnupriya, the girl of fifteen. Of course, the Lord could have fled without minding her at all. But that he would never do. Was she not his wife? Why should she object to a proceeding which would please Krishna? The resolve of the Lord was that if he should go, he must do it with the permission of his wife, and all those who loved him. Now judge the character of the being who, a youth of twenty-four, is capable of leaving his dearly-beloved and beautiful wife of fifteen from consideration of duty,—a duty in which he is not personally interested,—and a being who has the courage of hoping that he will be able to accomplish his object with the free consent of his devoted wife!

The lady, Vishnupriya, had gone on a visit to her father and mother for a few days. It was in her absence that the Lord had taken permission of his mother to leave society. While there, she

heard inarticulate whispers to the effect that her lord contemplated leaving her and society. The news gave her a shock which filled her with deep anxiety. But one idea kept her spirits up. Her husband was love personified. She did not know whom he did not love,—the high and the low, men and women, the lower animals, even shrubs and creepers. She could never persuade herself to believe that her lord would be able to take the cruel step of leaving his mother, herself, and the bhaktas for ever. She, however, did not tarry any longer at her father's, but immediately proceeded towards her own house, though it was then evening. It was then the middle of December. She found that her husband had already retired to bed,—a thing unusual with him; for, he was used to spend his nights sleepless with Krishna. She did not know that her husband had promised his mother to live for a time as an ordinary householder, like other men. She hastily took her supper, and as hastily entered the sleeping-room with a plate in hand which contained betel, chandan paste, and a garland of flowers. She found her husband was sleeping profoundly, having covered himself, as winter had set in, with a quilt, leaving his face uncovered.

The sight of the face, which eclipsed the full moon in lustre and beauty, gave her a thrill of joy. She felt a little disappointed when she saw that her husband was sleeping; but a little reflection showed that she should consider that circumstance rather lucky than otherwise. She had very little opportunities of coming in contact with her husband. He sometimes passed the whole night in kirtan, sometimes he passed the night in a state of ecstacy, forgetful of the external world. Vishnupriya felt that her lord had little opportunities of enjoying a good sleep. "Let him enjoy it," she thought, "I can wait. Besides, I have very little opportunities of enjoying a full sight of his lovely face. Now I can do it without interruption." So she sat at his feet on the couch, took them up in her lap and began to rub them gently with

her tender hands. The two feet seemed to her like a couple of lotuses, and she gazed at them, smelt them, touched them, and saluted them with great reverence, while tears of joy trickled down her cheeks. "I am the luckiest woman in the world," thought she. Immediately a pang shot through her heart. The great joy in her heart led her to the opposite extreme. "Do I deserve this joy," she now thought, "and did I not hear from trusty sources that he was contemplating leaving me? Yes, the most likely thing is, that he will leave me, for, it cannot be just that when there is so much misery in the world, I alone should enjoy uninterrupted happiness." This thought so affected her that tears gushed out of her eyes with some force, so that a drop or two fell on one of the feet of her Lord.*

Whether the warm tears produced an unusual sensation on the feet of the Lord, or for some other reason we know not, the Lord gave a start and opened his eyes. He found himself face to face with his wife, who, he saw, was weeping. He hastily arose, and tenderly embracing her, said: "What ails thee, my beloved? Why these tears?" The loving address from her husband only gave an additional impetus to the flow, and she could not, for a time, speak at all. The Lord allowed her time to calm herself, which she was able to do in a few minutes. She then looked at her husband reproachfully, and said: "Tell me, what is it that I hear?"

The Lord at once understood what the lady was aiming at, but he was then not quite ready to disclose his intentions to her. He wanted to evade the question, and, therefore, in an offhand manner, replied that she had no business to listen to what people said. Vishnupriya saw that her husband was in a gay mood,—a thing unusual with him,—and the change in her lord gave her pleasure and hope. She thought that it would be impossible for her loving husband to leave her. So she asked, though with less

* Chaitanya Mangal.

anxiety than what she felt before, to explain why people were circulating the rumour that he would leave—she was going to say her, but correcting herself, said—his mother.

The Lord laughed a gay laugh at the query. "And is this the way we meet after so many days' absence?" said he. "Let us talk of lighter things." Now the poor woman had never seen her lord in that mood before, and she forgot all about the rumour in her happiness. So they passed a few hours in bliss as wife and husband. The Lord had promised Shachee that he would live an ordinary life and he was doing so. That night he tried to forget his bhaktas, and sought the happiness of his wife. Suddenly Vishnupriya asked, in a tone of anxiety and alarm: "Why are you weeping?"

The Lord was not weeping, but smiling,—smiling externally, though his heart was, no doubt, bursting. The loving eyes of the wife had penetrated through this external gaiety and succeeded in detecting that, though he was smiling in his face, he was weeping in his heart. The simple wife had then forgotten all about the anxiety, and was "swimming in an ocean of pleasure", in the company of her husband. Her simplicity, her trust in him, her love for him, made his parting with her a serious business with the Lord. The thought that he would have to part with such a loving and confiding girl, who had no one in the world except himself to console or protect her, led his heart to weep in silence, and though he tried to conceal the fact from his wife by assuming an external gaiety, the loving eyes of the wife had found it out. To her question, the Lord replied, "Weep? You see, I am laughing."

The reply did not remove the suspicion of the wife, but increased it. For, she saw that her question had almost betrayed her husband into an outburst of tears. So she said this time, with great earnestness, anxiety and alarm: "I clearly see you are weeping. I feel that you are not enjoying yourself; you are

deceiving me by your hollow smiles, and I am convinced that you are contemplating something dreadful, and,—the rumour is true."

The Lord suddenly became grave. He felt that the time had come to unburthen his heart to his wife. He looked sadly at her face, and said with a voice, trembling with emotion, "you have divined correctly,—I mean to be a Sannyasee."

The lady looked at her husband, almost stunned by the information, to assure herself whether she had heard aright. The Lord continued: "You and I are united for ever; nothing can separate us except our own folly. Let us worship Krishna, which is the sole object of human existence. Listen to my advice, because I am your most disinterested friend. You are called Vishnupriya, which means 'beloved of Vishnu, God.' Prove it by your action. Make Krishna love you by your devotion to Him. Forget this world—it is only a temporary abode."

Vishnupriya ought to have fallen into a fainting fit, at the dreadful news imparted to her. But whether she did not then properly realize the import of the message conveyed to her, or the holy presence of the Lord gave her strength, she remained in her senses. She, however, found herself paralyzed. She attempted to say something, but could not for some time. She at last broke silence, and said: "Do not be cruel to your mother. People will speak ill of you. As for me, I know I do not deserve to have you." And she tried to think, which she found difficult in her that state of mind.

She again commenced: "I see, I am a clog in the way of your spiritual progress. Very well, I will not come to you, I will live at my father's; but do not leave your mother, I beseech you.*

The Lord replied: "My dearest, give up all these worldly thoughts. I love you, you love me. It is not possible for me to

* The general impression is that a life of celibacy is necessary for an uninterrupted growth of the spiritual faculties.

make you miserable for a mere whim or caprice. I know you will suffer for my absence, but forget not also that I will suffer equally. And why do I give you, my beloved, this pang of separation, and also take it upon myself, unless because there is no help for it? I do all this to worship Krishna, and the result will be excellent both for you and me. So, my dear wife, give me leave with a cheerful heart, so that I may go, happy in the thought that I go with your permission."

Vishnupriya.—"But why do you ask the leave of me? Are you not free to do whatever you like?"

Lord.—"No, I have no right to go without your permission, given freely, without any pressure whatsoever, for, you are my wife."

Vishnupriya.—"But are you serious? Is it possible that you can leave me? How can that be? Your mother will die as soon as she hears of this. Do not talk or think of leaving her. Every one in Nadia will either die or follow you, if you leave home. You are, no doubt, jesting. Let me go to mother and tell her that you are talking dreadful things." And she rose to depart.

The Lord caught hold of her hand and assured her in a most serious manner, that his mother had already been informed of everything and had given her permission!

Vishnupriya gazed at him doubtingly. She felt dizzy, choked and dazed, and then she fell with a shriek into her husband's lap. The Lord was confounded. He sought to rouse her, and after a while, succeeded. But she awoke only to weep. The poor girl at last found speech. She said, "I am the luckiest woman in the world, yet I cannot say that I was passing a pleasant life. I tossed about in my bed for sleep which refused to come without you, while you were doing Kirtan at Sribas'. When you came home after Kirtan, you seemed to me unapproachable. Husband as you are, I have had rarely an opportunity of having a full sight of your face. Now, you leave your young wife to her fate! Can

this be religion ? You say your mother has given you permission. She is noble. I have not her strength of mind. But she is old ; death which is sure to happen sooner in her case, will release her from her sufferings. But I shall have to lead a dreary life for how long God alone knows. Don't leave me, dear. I never offended you. It is not your duty to leave me. I cannot live without you. Do not forsake your innocent wife." And she, with folded hands and in a kneeling posture, earnestly and with tearful eyes besought her lord.

The Lord felt himself overcome by this girl of fifteen,—the wife proved stronger than even the mother. But yet she must yield, for, an Avatar of God cannot go for nothing, and no human being can frustrate or retard His work. The Lord had to deaden the love of his mother Shachee for him, to obtain her permission to go, by imparting to her wisdom. In the same manner, the Lord sought to overawe the love of Vishnupriya for him, by a vision. In the case of his mother he succeeded partially, but in the case of his wife he utterly failed.

His wife at this moment saw that her husband had been changed into Vishnu ! Vishnu is a form of Sree Krishna.

Vishnupriya saw as if her husband had disappeared, and Sree Vishnu taken his place. The young girl thus found herself face to face with Divinity. She was not confounded, however, by the sight, nor even confused. When she saw the living Vishnu before her, she immediately assumed the posture of reverence as one should do before a holy man, and saluted Him with the deepest humility. And then with folded hands, she said : " Thou great Lord of the universe ! Give me this boon (bar). Return to me my husband !"*

Said Vishnu : " But you get Me. What more do you want ?"

Vishnupriya.—" My Lord God, I cannot live without my

* Chaitanya Mangal.

husband. I worship you, Merciful Father, but I love my husband ; give him back to me."

Such was the love of Vishnupriya for her husband. And the Lord had to cut such a tie asunder to renounce society !

The form of Vishnu immediately disappeared, and the Lord again re-appeared, to the wondering gaze of his wife.

He immediately took her in his bosom, and said : "Bravo, my dear ! The worthiest of women, the best of wives ! So you preferred me to Vishnu !" He said this, and wept. And thus wife and husband wept for some time. The Lord at length broke the silence. He said : "As you are the worthier half of me, you must help me in my work of imparting Harinam to mankind : For this purpose I must become a Sannyasee." Here his wife interrupted : "You see, what I complain of is that if you must leave society, why should you not take me with you ?"

The Lord smiled : "No, that cannot be. I must forsake you, I must make you, my mother and all my dear ones weep, and by their tears wipe out the sins of mankind. Do you understand me ? If I leave you all, the hearts of men will be softened towards me, and they will accept and nourish the seed of bhakti in their heart. Put the salvation of men in one scale, and your pangs of separation in the other, and you will see that your desire to keep me is based upon selfish considerations. Would you not suffer, to save mankind ? Why should you not suffer, if your sufferings remove the miseries of men ?"

Vishnupriya.—"Yes, I see, I should be doing wrong by detaining you. But the fact is, I cannot survive your departure."

The Lord.—"No, do not think of that. Survive my departure bravely, as I hope to be able to survive separation from you. You talk of pangs of separation. But separation for spiritual purposes is not separation at all. And then how do we separate ? You will still possess everything of me, except my body. I shall live as you will, and we shall still have the privilege

of loving one another. You will get news of me constantly. As for seeing me, that you will be able to do in your heart. Enthrone me in your heart and enjoy my company. We never obtain the body of Krishna, but the sublime bliss of men consists in their union with Him, spirit to spirit. Now, my dear, I promise you this as I promised my mother, that whenever you feel an ardent desire to see me, I will come to soothe you and you will see me in your heart."

The Lord stopped, gazed at his wife, and then said slowly : "I have yet a request to make of you. Worship Krishna, day and night, and that is the last request of your husband."

The Lord again stopped and continued: "And then I will tell you a secret. As a human being you are subject to the laws which govern humanity. Of course, you will now and then pine for me. But God pays them fully who perform great deeds from disinterested motives. He gives them holy joy, which guards them from sufferings. Mankind will bless you for ever and ever for your suffering on their account."

Vishnupriya got alarmed. She hastily said: "Are you going just now? Let me have your company for a few days more."

The Lord took her in his lap, and said: "No, not just now. I will go when you have been almost tired of me." And the Lord again came down to the level of his wife. He clasped her neck and wept bitterly. He said: "Forgive me for leaving you. I am beside myself; indeed, I am not under my own control. The absence of Krishna has made me restless. The world is a desert without Him. Without Him I am like a body without a soul. All my passions, all my desires, have been dried up. It is Krishna, and Krishna alone Who can fill the void in me." And husband and wife wept. Vishnupriya said that she agreed to perform her part of the compact, and cheerfully accept the situation. The fact is, the idea that her sufferings meant the salvation of mankind, gave her a joy

which drowned the sorrows that the prospect of a temporary separation from her husband gave her. Besides, the company and example of her husband led her into a position never occupied by a woman before. She felt herself then more a spiritual than a human being of flesh and blood, and the most blessed of God's creatures. *

* The Vaishnava theory is, that God can be "won over" by disinterested love, though the object of such love be not He Himself. Vishnupriya sacrificed Vishnu (God) for her husband, and such disinterested love is intensely pleasing to Vishnu. Another theory is, disinterested sacrifice is so pleasing to God that He presents a holy joy to the devotee, which enables the latter to undergo the suffering, not only without pain but with positive joy to himself. Though Vishnupriya pined for her husband, yet the holy joy, that she had earned by her sacrifice on behalf of humanity, sustained her.

CHAPTER VI.

THE RENUNCIATION.

THUS the Lord took leave of his friends and relations. If the idea of the Lord becoming a mendicant, gave them intense pain, the Lord himself did his best to make them forget it by his conduct towards them. He was now always with them,—friends, mother and wife. Although he could never think nor speak of anything except Krishna, still he kept their company, and rarely allowed himself to be overpowered by the influence. He slept well, ate well, and lived like other men. Thus about a month passed. The Lord in this manner fulfilled his promise to his mother, that he would spend some days in Nadia as a householder. The highest happiness of Shachee was to cook fine dishes for her son, who, of course, was a strict vegetarian, and this she was able to do for a month, to her heart's content.

Indeed, the gay humour of the Lord, his constant presence in the midst of those who loved him, and the gladness which he imparted to every one who approached him, led the latter to forget partially the fact that he was about to leave society. Some even went to the length of believing that if the Lord ever left them, it would be after the lapse of many years.

But the Lord had fixed the day of his departure at the moment he promised his mother that he would remain for some time at home. He had taken permission of his mother, say, towards the close of December; and the end of January was then

approaching. Indeed, the last day of his stay in society had arrived, yet no one had the least suspicion that he would leave Nadia the following day.

The Lord rose in the morning as usual. No trace could be seen in either his attitude, actions or words that he would leave home on the following day,—for ever. He bathed, and then ate his breakfast. He talked to his friends of his Krishna —the topic which absorbed his mind. Afternoon came, and he set out with a charming dress for a stroll in the town. He passed through familiar places—places where he had played as a boy and taught as a Professor. He was wearing a precious silken *dhuti*, and the bhaktas had, as usual, decorated him with garlands of flowers. Friends surrounded him, and crowds followed him. Ladies stood on the terrace to have a look at him. As he proceeded, they showered flowers upon him. As he passes people, they fall prostrate before him ; and though this sort of submission pains the Lord, he cannot help it. He talks of Krishna as he proceeds ; and whenever a friend has been able to say a good thing in reply, he encourages him with a smile,—a smile which has been likened to the rays of the moon. Shop-keepers leave their occupation as he passes by their shops, to come to salute him ; every one in the streets stands aside to give him and his friends way. Thus he passed through some of the principal streets of the city,—for the last time.

He arrived at the strand, and there saw some beautiful places. He came to his own bathing-place ; the place where he had passed the happiest hours of his life ; where he had played so many mischievous pranks as a boy, and as a young student ; where he had defeated Keshava, the intellectual giant ; and where he had enjoyed the company of his friends, and spent day after day, discoursing about Krishna for many happy months. He sat there, and his companions sat with him. He looked at the Ganges, and mentally took leave of the dear objects that sur-

rounded him. Never more would he sit there as a citizen of Nadia, or a son of Shachee! He visited the trees, shrubs, flowers, and gardens, which he loved so well; he took leave of them, one by one, as he would see them no more.

He came home in the evening and sat with his friends in his verandah,—where he would never sit again. He had yet two duties to perform. One was to take a hearty dinner, to satisfy his mother. The highest object of Shachee's ambition, as I said, was to cook for her son, and set before him choice dishes. The Lord had ordered his mother to cook for him some fine ones. This he had done solely to please his mother. The other object of the Lord was to take leave of the citizens. To serve the latter purpose, he attracted them.

During the *Rash* Leelá Sree Krishna played his flute, and the Gopees ran to Him. In the same manner, the Lord desired the presence of the citizens, and they felt an irresistible impulse to come to see him. "Let us go to see the Lord," said they, and they invaded his house in batches. Soon the house, the courtyard and out-houses of the Lord were filled with people. They all came with garlands of flowers, and some trifling presents, such as vegetables, butter, milk, sweets, and so forth, for the Lord. They all fell prostrate before the Lord, and prayed for salvation. They exclaim, "save us, O Lord, thou friend of the sinner." The Lord answers them, saying, "Worship Sree Krishna and He will save you," and the crowd raise a peal of Haribole. They disperse, and another crowd comes.

Thus the Lord was occupied till midnight in taking leave of his followers. He looks at them mournfully and earnestly recommends them never to forget Krishna. "Of course, you love me," he tells them. "If so, show it by worshipping Krishna." And the crowd leaves him, filled with bhakti and with a determination to live a holy life the rest of their days. He then embraced his friends ardently as usual with him, and dismissed them. They

saw that the Lord was in the happiest of moods, and they themselves felt happy and left him to pass a happy night at their respective homes. The Lord then sat down to his dinner. The good old lady placed before him fifty dishes, and sat before him to make him eat everything that she had prepared. He ate and talked to his mother in the gayest mood possible, as if she and he were the only two living beings in existence. When he had finished eating he took leave of his mother, and entering his sleeping room, waited there for his wife to come. Vishnupriya had almost forgotten that her Lord had asked and obtained her permission to be a Sannyasee. She was now accustomed to dress beautifully,--her husband's change of mood had led her to do so; and on the night in question, she appeared before him as a fairy queen, the most beautiful woman in the world.

Now the Lord wanted to pass the night with her. It was agreed that they would dress one another, and the wife began first. She decorated the face of her husband with *aloka* (white paint) and combed his hair and tied it into beautiful shape; she had brought flowers and garlands as usual with her, and she utilized them to the best effect.

The husband then claimed the privilege of dressing her, according to previous arrangement. Vishnupryia was surprised to see the taste displayed by her Lord. She was drunken with joy at the tender care bestowed upon her by her Lord; indeed, he seemed to be in the merriest of moods. Thus they spent hours together in supreme bliss.* And then they slept. The lady exhausted, soon fell profoundly asleep, but the husband did not. It was the cold season and the lady slept in the warm bosom of her husband.

The Lord, on perceiving that his wife was asleep, was anxious

* The custom in Bengal is that wives, while they are young, are not generally permitted to meet their husbands or speak with them, in the presence of others. So they usually meet only when they retire for the night.

to get up, but being in the close embrace of his wife, he found it difficult to do it without disturbing her. He succeeded eventually, however, in extricating himself, and whilst doing so, gave her his pillow in his stead.* Having kissed her without awakening her, he came down gently from the couch, and in as gentle a manner, changed his beautiful clothes for coarse ones. He possessed golden chains and other ornaments which he determined to leave behind. He, in short, would take nothing with him, except the coarse piece of cloth which he wore. Though it was bitterly cold, he felt no need of any further clothing with which to cover himself. The door was noiselessly opened and he stept into the courtyard. From there he saluted his sleeping mother with folded hands. He then passed through the outer door and from thence hastily proceeded towards the river.

It was dark. To use the ferry-boat, would not be in accordance with his purpose, for, he had no intention of leaving any trace behind; so, following the example of his brother Vishwarup, he plunged into the river. A few moments before he was sleeping on a couch, provided with the finest bedding in the world, in the close embrace of his beautiful and loving wife. Now he was, in the bitter cold, swimming across the river! With his powerful arms he soon reached the other bank, and fearing he might be overtaken by morning and his flight thus betrayed, he ran —actually ran towards his destination, with his wet cloths on.

When day arrived, he had already left behind him the neighbourhood where he was personally known. The chroniclers discuss the motive of the Lord in being so sweet to his wife on the night of his departure from home. His object was, say they, to kindle to its brightest the love which his wife bore for him, in order that at the last moment he should leave in her heart the sweetest impression of him. He had come to teach

* *Bangshi-Sheekha*—by Bangshi, a companion of the Lord, and a guardian of Vishnupriya.

men to love by his own example ; to teach that God is All-good and All-love. He taught not only the ultimate union of men to God, but to those whom they loved. It was not his object to forget or to be forgotten.

Vishnupriya had been sleeping profoundly in the bosom of her husband,—secure, warm and happy. The pillow proved an indifferent substitute for her lord, and so, after a little, she awoke with a start. Finding that her husband was not in his place, she, in the dark, felt for him with her hands everywhere on the couch, but only to discover that he was not there. Then she addressed him and asked: "Where have you gone?" But no reply came to her query. Thereupon she rose, and going to the door of her room, found that it was open. Alarmed, she hastily went out to the verandah. "Where can he have gone at this time of the night?"—thought she. Just then the idea rushed into her mind that her husband had perhaps left her for ever. She remembered the loving caresses of her lord a few hours before; his look, his attitude towards her; and she fancied that they all meant leave-taking. She felt dizzy, but by an effort dragged herself to the room of Shachee. "Mother," she knocks at the door, and says, "mother, get up quick." Shachee responded to the call at once. "Who is it that calls," responds the old lady. "Is it Vishupriya? What is the matter, is Nimai all right?" "Get up, mother," says the wife of the Lord, "He is gone!"

"Gone! Where? What do you mean?"—asks the mother. Vishnupriya stammers out a reply.

The mother hurriedly got up and lighted a lamp. She opened the door and saw her daughter-in-law leaning against the wall for support. She explained that they both had been sleeping and that afterwards she awoke to find him not there.

Taking the lamp with them, they both started in search of him. They found the outer door open. So they knew he had

gone out. They entered the public street. Shachee carried the lamp and her daughter-in-law closely followed her like a shadow, holding on to her *saree*. They proceeded on a few steps, and finding no trace of him, Shachee in the agony of her distress, began to call her son by name. "Nimai, is my Nimai there?" called she loudly.* This she continued to do as she proceeded on her way.

No response came. They both felt unequal to the task; they felt dizzy and could scarcely stand, and so they returned home, and having arrived, Shachee sat in the outer apartment. Just then Ishan, the servant, rose, and seeing the old lady prostrated with grief, went to her side and supported her, for, she was unable to sit up without assistance.

Vishnupriya entered the inner apartment and sat there alone,—in a state of despair. She had been beautifully dressed and decorated by her husband a few hours before. But she could not continue to sit upright; she flung herself on the bare ground. She tried to weep, but tears refused to come.

Soon afterwards Sreebas came and was followed by others, and in this manner the house was filled by the dear bhaktas of the Lord. They heard all, and stood stupefied. None of them could tell whither or why the Lord had gone. Of course, every one suspected that he had left them for ever, but no one felt absolutely sure. Besides, they had not the heart to suggest in the presence of the old lady that her son had left home and society for ever. What others refused to do, Shachee herself did. She touched her forehead, and by a sign indicated that her son had left her. She indicated by a sign, because she had scarcely the power of speech.

At last Shachee found speech. She said, "my house is full of valuable things. They belong to you all, bhaktas of Sree Krishna.

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* Bashu Ghose.

Take them all. As for me, let me go in search of my son. You, his friends, take care of my daughter."

Sreebas suggested that she had no right to assume the worst. No one yet knew where the Lord had gone to, and for what purpose he had left home. "Let us have," he suggested, "a private talk amongst ourselves." The leaders thereupon left Shachee and the others for a moment, for a private conference amongst themselves. "What do you think?" asks Nitai of Sreebas. Sreebas said, "there is no use concealing the fact, I think, the worst has happened." "So do I," said Nitai. And they began to discuss the plan to be followed. It was at last settled to organise a search party. There are well-known places in India where Sannyasees congregate. These the bhaktas prepared to visit. Of course, there were hundreds of such places in India, and many of them from two to three thousand miles away from Nadia, and almost inaccessible. But the bhaktas were not to be baulked in their then state of mind by such trifling considerations. They proposed to divide themselves into as many search-parties as there were holy places, and having visited all of them, bring the Lord back, or at least tidings of him. As the bhaktas literally could not live without him, they resolved either to find the Lord, or to die in the attempt.

At this moment Nitai remembered having heard the Lord state that he would be initiated at Katwa, by Keshava Bharati. His idea was, therefore, that before organising the search-parties, the wisest course would be to search him at Katwa, which was a town only sixteen miles up the river from Nadia. So it was resolved that Nitai, Chandra Shekhar, Mukunda and a few others should proceed to Katwa to fetch back the Lord, if he was there, and if he would consent to return. Nitai now returned to Shachee and addressed her and the company present, in a voice loud enough for Vishnupriya to hear, who was in an inner room, and with as much cheerfulness as

he could assume: "Our Lord has left us, temporarily as we hope. Let us strictly follow his bidding. Pundit Sreebas and others will take care of the mother and the wife. I and others are proceeding to Katwa to see if the Lord has gone there." And then addressing Shachee directly, he said, "Mother, rest assured, I shall bring the Lord back to you. I promise this." Saying this, Nitai and his companions fled towards Katwa.

Nitai felt that he had been, by the flight of the Lord, placed in sole charge of his affairs. He felt that unless he succeeded in bringing back the Lord, the ladies would die of grief. He would, therefore, bring him at whatever cost. He would sacrifice ten times over to accomplish that object.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MONASTERY.

KESHAVA BHARATI was sitting in his hut, near the river Ganges, under a Bar tree. There the Lord met him and fell at his feet. The ascetic Bharati was startled; he thought a celestial being had dropped from the heavens. For, the Lord had approached him with the speed of lightning, enveloped in the light which was always emitted by his person when in a state of ecstacy. So he asked: "Who are you saluting me? You seem to be much higher than I am."

The Lord replied with folded hands: "They call me Nimai. I once looked upon your lotus feet at Nadia. Then you were kind enough to promise to initiate me as a Sannyasee. I am now come to be blessed. I now offer myself at your lotus feet. Accept me, merciful as you are, and pilot me across the ocean of worldliness."

Bharati then remembered all. He also remembered expressing the belief, when the young man came before him as an applicant, that he could be no other than the Lord God Himself. But in course of time his faith in the Lord had become weak. He now became aware that the most beautiful youth in the world was intent on making him fulfil the promise of initiating him, that he had made in a moment of forgetfulness. He was not willing to perform the ceremony, but how could he evade it? Without giving the Lord any information on the subject, he pro-

posed to him that he should rest there for the present, and that he would receive an answer some time after.

When he had first seen the Lord at Nadia, the Bharati had come to the conclusion that he was God Almighty. The second inspection at Katwa revived that belief to some extent. But God or man, there was no doubt that he was a very comely being. He thought that the rigours of the life of a Sannyasee would kill this tender creature. * His soft, lustrous, large eyes showed that he was made of love. How would absolute renunciation, which requires the eradication of all sentiments, suit him? There was another difficulty. Sannyasee as he was, Keshava felt his heart violently moved at the sight of the Lord. Indeed, he felt an attraction for him like that of a tender father for his child. He resolved, in his mind, that he would never comply with the request of the young man.

But then, he had made a promise and was bound to fulfil it. After much thought, he said: "Nimai, it is true I made you a promise, and I am willing to keep it. But it is not orthodox to permit a young man to enter our order. A man must have passed the age of fifty before he can hope to enter our society. The passions are always very strong, and to subdue them is difficult. But a Sannyasee must do so, or he is irrevocably lost. A householder may fall a victim, say, to his lust, and yet may be excused. But for a Sannyasee there is no forgiveness if he shows any such weakness. We, therefore, offer no one the privilege of entering our order until he has proved the strength of his mind, and attained the age of fifty."

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* It is impossible for a man to endure the rigours of the life of a Sannyasee, who has not the holy fire in him. His food must come to him unsolicited. He must take no condiment, not even salt. He must sleep on the bare ground. He must not see even the shadow of a woman. He must conquer all emotions, and must make no difference between the foulest and the most attractive of things. The rigours are too many for enumeration.

Nimai, who was all the while thinking of his beloved Krishna, was roused from his reveries. He understood the purport of the address, and replied: "Master! I know, you only test me by your refusal. As to answering your objection, I am a mere boy, and know not how to reply. You object because I am young; but do not the young die? Pray, do not disappoint me. I am dying by inches for want of Krishna, Whom I must visit at Brindaban, and, merciful master, you alone can release me from the bondage which keeps me from going there."

"Your bondage is your wife and mother,—is it not?" said the Bharati. "You cannot now leave home, because you have a duty towards them. I have to release you of your sacred duty so that you can forsake them with an easy conscience, leave them to their fate, and proceed on your longed-for pilgrimage. If I assist you, I shall thereby offend God, and your wife and mother will curse me, and I shall deserve it."

But people began to arrive, and a crowd already collected there. From Nadia, the five bhaktas of the Lord had left home and followed the Lord closely. They left Vishnupriya and Shachee in a condition which can be better imagined than described. They themselves felt, in the absence of the Lord, like bodies without souls. So they not only proceeded towards Katwa, but ran as fast as their legs would carry them. They approached the Bharati's shelter, and they saw that the Sannyasee was there and the Lord sitting before him, with his head between his knees. They raised the shout of "there", "there," "there is the Lord," and accelerated their pace. The shout led the Lord to raise his head. He was weeping for Krishna. But the sight of his friends lighted up his divine face with a smile. The bhaktas came, and they appeared before him as men who had just undergone a great shock. The Lord, however, received them with an affectionate smile which soothed their souls.

When the Lord looked at a man, his eyes showed such unutterable love that the party, looked at, immediately surrendered himself to the Master. The Lord embraced them, and the bhaktas again felt rejoiced. But then strangers came also. Katwa was a much bigger city then than it is now. Wherever there is light, insects are irresistibly attracted towards it. Thus the Lord could never be alone. His presence immediately collected an ever-increasing crowd around him. The crowd continuously increased, and the story flew from mouth to mouth, that a young man, who was perhaps a god in disguise, had left his young wife and old mother, to enter the order of the Sannyasees, at the monastery of Keshava Bharati.

People flocked to the place to see the young man. They came not to go back, for, they were rivetted to the spot, by the spectacle before them.

The crowd increased constantly ; men, women and children gathered round the Lord. To them the Lord seemed to be the incarnation of bhakti and prem. Those who looked at his innocent face, loving eyes and humble attitude, were violently affected. The sight of him filled them with holy thoughts and pathetic feelings. They were attracted to him in an irresistible manner. They had never seen him before, but yet they were drawn towards him in a manner of which they had no previous experience. Mothers felt more attracted by the Lord than even by their own children ! How was this ? But this was a fact ; and, of course, they could not leave him. They stood there to see if they could dissuade the youth from his act of renunciation.

The crowd increased every moment, and the intelligence flew from street to street, from the town to the villages in the interior. When the bhaktas came, they found a crowd had already gathered. The Lord accosted the bhaktas with a benign smile : "I am glad you have come. To-morrow I shall let fall the shackles which bind me to society, and will then run to the lotus feet of my

Krishna," and the thought gave him celestial joy. "Mukunda," continued he, "do sing of Krishna. My heart is thirsting after Him." And Mukunda, who had gone there to bring the Lord back and not to encourage him in the performance of his pious duties, had not the courage to refuse the command. So he sang in praise of Krishna. The sound sent a thrill of joy through the whole frame of the Lord, and he rose for a dance!

The Lord, in short, was in the highest spirits. He had now almost gained his end; he was at the point of leaving society for a trip to Bridaban in search of Krishna. That was now the highest object of his ambition, and when Mukunda began his song, he danced with such power that the crowd who had come to see him, were irresistibly carried away by the current. A holy feeling gradually overpowered them, and many began to sing and dance with the Lord.

Worldliness in every shape found no place there. A feeling of pathos was evoked, which moved every one present. Nay, this feeling was carried to the villages. Those present ran to their homes to fetch their dear ones to have a sight of the holy spectacle, and thus a dense crowd filled the monastery of Keshava.

When the Lord danced, tears gushed out of his eyes and wetted the spectators as if by a shower. Every one was surprised at the spectacle. The Lord was persuaded to desist by Nitai and Chandra Shekhar, and to take rest for a moment. Keshava then addressed the Lord. He said: "Nimai, if Krishna-prem is the highest object of human existence, I see you have got it in the fullest degree. What is then the use of entering into our order? We became Sannyasees only to save our souls, but it seems to me that you are competent to save the souls of all mankind. You have no need to be a Sannyasee." The Lord was very much hurt at this speech. He implored the holy man to take pity on him and not to speak to him in that way: for, he

had come to be saved and not praised. "Release me, master," said he, "have mercy upon me; for, my heart is rent at the thought that I am without Krishna."

The Sannyasee again replied: "But, Nimai, do you think I have not found you out? You are the Krishna Whom you are seeking, for everything in you shows it."

No sooner had the Lord heard this than he fell with a shriek at the feet of the holy man. He said: "I am already almost dead, and, pray, do not trample me in addition. I am a worm only in the creation of God, and you call me Krishna! Even to listen to such compliments, is perdition. Pray, master, do not be so cruel as to pay me any compliment," and he wept with such anguish that Keshava felt sorry that he had hurt the tender heart of the Lord by a thoughtless remark. But he was nevertheless determined not to initiate the Lord. So he said: "Forgive me, Nimai, if I have pained you. But I cannot initiate you. You must first take leave, free leave, of your mother, and beget a child before you can hope to be initiated."

The Lord looked imploringly at Keshava, and said: "Listen, master! Both my mother and wife have given me free leave. And, as for my youth, death is not a respecter of age; if the old die, so do the young. We must be always prepared for death. Save me. Further, your refusal is killing me by inches."

The Bharati replied: "Nimai, I will frankly deal with you. I have never seen a being like you, nor has any one else. You look more tender than a flower. You have been tenderly nursed. You have no idea of the rigours that a man in my order has to go through. You will never survive them. In a short time you will die, and then the sin of having killed you, will descend upon my head. Your mother and wife will curse me, and that curse I shall deserve and it will take effect. Besides, you are not in need of entering into this or that order, for the salvation of your soul You are already higher than all men. You have

attained to a higher position than any one had ever succeeded in reaching before. Moreover, I have not told you the greatest of my difficulties. You say that you have already obtained permission from your mother and wife. That can never be a free permission. I fancy they gave it because they could not resist you, as I myself feel it difficult to do. You see, I am a Sannyasee; I have to eradicate all my tender sentiments. As a matter of fact, I have almost conquered the emotions which influence the human mind. But your sight has spoilt all that I had acquired by a life-long culture in asceticism. It has melted my heart, and I would have wept like a silly man; but I have suppressed my feelings for fear of creating a scandal. I feel for you as a doting father does for an only and worthy son. Excuse me, Nimai. See, how these thousands of men are weeping for you."

Nimai raised his head to have a look at those who surrounded him, and whose presence he had hitherto scarcely noticed. This movement on the part of Nimai was a signal for loud lamentations from the thousands who had assembled. They all wept in a chorus. They all implored him to go home, and save the lives of his mother and wife whom he had left disconsolate.

The nearest to him said: "Pundit, your personal charms, your grace, your bhakti and your prem are beyond description. And are you going now to cover yourself with a piece of rag and live under trees and in caves? The hardest of men will die of grief at the spectacle that you intend to present to the world."

Nimai rose and with folded hands and tearful eyes addressed the vast assembly:—"Fathers and mothers, bless me! Bless me that I may get my Krishna. You don't know what is my misery. It is of no moment to me whether I live in a palace or in a cave. My heart is void, for, there is no Krishna there. His presence alone can give me happiness, and His absence is misery. Yes, I

am young, and my colour is somewhat fair. If there is anything good in me, is not Krishna the most worthy object to whom I could consecrate it ?"

The sentiment of the Lord, the pathos in his voice, the earnestness of his tone and the deep holy feeling that his lovely face and tearful eyes betrayed, led the assembly to another outburst of grief. They felt silenced; they had no answer to give to his irresistible appeal.

His own companions had gone there to fetch him home. His uncle, Chandra Shekhar, his only important relation, and who was in the place of his father, had gone to persuade him to come back. But the spectacle they saw silenced them. They could not utter a word. They sat, as statues, dazed. When, at the bidding of the Lord, Mukunda sang, and when the Lord rose to dance, Nitai rose with him to hold him, lest he should fall to the ground in a swoon. And Chandra Shekhar either helped Mukunda in the song, or sat with his head between his knees, weeping. That was all they did.

But worldly griefs found very little opportunity of oppressing those present. The Lord expelled such sentiments by his methods, which, together with his presence, evoked higher feelings in the mind. In a song describing the Lord, a bhakta says that, "a look at the face of the Lord created pathetic feelings in the mind. He attracted men irresistibly towards him. At his bidding, hundreds of his bhaktas would have died a hundred deaths with pleasure." Napoleon said that no man was served by his fellows as he was. But Napoleon was never served as Lord Gauranga was. The multitude that had collected, felt a sort of indescribable attraction for him. This irresistibly attractive and lovely being was going to be a Sannyasee, or rather going to sacrifice himself for ever, and people wept. How could any one bear the idea of such a beautiful object living under a tree, and starving himself almost to death? When a beautiful young lady enters a convent

purely to devote her life to the service of God, the sight evokes higher feelings, and a feeling of deep compassion for her. It was a similar feeling, but intensified a hundredfold, that overtook those who saw the spectacle before them. How could a mother survive the sufferings and loss of such a son? thought the elderly ladies; and they wept with the men. The young ladies thought of his young wife, and they too joined in the sympathy. Now this was worldly misery which sought to overtake them.

But the Lord's presence, sayings and doings, on the other hand, evoked the highest feelings in the mind. What they saw was that the being, for whom they were weeping, was himself not at all aware of the sacrifice that he was going to make. On the other hand, he was in the highest state of ecstacy. They saw that the mere name of Krishna threw him into a paroxysm of joy. They saw that he would have danced and danced in his superabundant joy, utterly forgetful of the fact that he was leaving home, mother, wife and society, and going to live in the wilderness, if he had not been forced to stop by his bhaktas. They saw his tears of joy which gushed out in torrents, and the ever-changing graceful expression of his face, due to the divers holy feelings which passed through his mind; and they themselves were filled by holy feelings of which they had no former experience.

First came *udas* or indifference to worldly things. Then came repentance. The idea rushed into their minds that they were temporary sojourners in the world, and that it was *maya* (delusion) which was keeping them bound to earth. What is money worth, or power or honour? It does not accompany its owner to the other world. What is the good of gold when it can neither secure happiness here, nor save one from punishment hereafter? What folly to cleave to this world as if there was anything in it which could give any real happiness! And this is *udas*.

The feeling that followed *udas* was repentance. "And so we have forgotten God! To attain him is the object of human

existence ; but what are we doing? Are we not living the lives of brutes? Fie! We have no right to stop Nimai Pundit. Let him forsake society; that is the best thing for everyone of us to do. Who is a wife and who is a mother? Every one suffers for his own acts. A wife must bear her own burdens, as the husband his. We have forgotten Him, from Whom we came and to Whom we must go." And this is repentance.

Others attained to a higher position. They imbibed some of the joys of the Lord. That joy proceeded from the realization of the fact that Krishna is good, loving, merciful and charitable; that He is constantly drawing His creatures towards him; and that misery is a delusion, with such a loving God to protect man. "Why should I mourn when I have my Krishna? Is not Krishna, who is love and joy, ceaselessly dancing with Radha in Brindaban, and drawing all men towards Him by his bewitching flute? So let us join in His *ananda* (joy). Oh joy! Oh joy! misery is a delusion. Let us dance."

Notwithstanding the influx of the holy feeling into the minds of the vast crowd present, worldly feelings occasionally overtook them. Then they felt that the Lord ought to go back home, and they wept in sympathy. Said Bharati, addressing the Lord, whose determination not to initiate the latter was getting gradually weaker: "Nimai, you see, I cannot initiate you except with the express permission of your mother and wife. You say you obtained it. But that does not satisfy me. You had better go back home, take their permission again and come to me, and then I will initiate you."

No sooner had Bharati said so than the Lord looked mournfully at the holy man, and said, "Very well, since you wish it," and he rose to run home! He had already proceeded a hundred steps before the bhaktas came to know of his intention. They asked the Lord to wait so that they could follow him, and the Lord waited.

Now the object of Bharati was to lead the Lord home by a stratagem, and then fly from Katwa. With this object he had asked the Lord to take permission once again from his mother and wife. The Lord was quite confident that it would be the easiest thing for him to obtain it ; and he readily undertook this journey of sixteen miles and back for this permission. The look of the Lord when he left for home, shot through the heart of Bharati. "So I am deceiving this guileless young man, who is either the God Krishna Himself or His most favoured bhakta existing! Fie!" thought he; "This won't do for me, who aspires after a holy life." So he again addressed the Lord. He said, "Come back, Pundit, I will initiate you."

No sooner had Keshava Bharati said this than the bhaktas sat down then and there, as if shot down by a cannon ball, and the vast crowd raised a loud shout of lamentation. Keshava himself hung down his head in sorrow and repentance,—repentance for having weakly yielded to the wishes of the young man against his strong determination. It was only the Lord, amongst the vast crowd, who felt happy, as he came back and fell at the feet of Keshava to express his gratitude. He then addressed the bhaktas: "Why do you weep? This is not showing any love for me. To-morrow I hope to be released from worldliness, and to go to my Krishna. If you love me, wish me joy." And then he addressed the vast crowd and said, "to-morrow the fetters that bind me to worldliness and to the world, will be cut asunder. To-morrow I shall be released from the bondage of worldliness. Bless me, fathers and mothers!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MEMORABLE DAY.

ASSURED of his initiation, the Lord became mad with joy, and imparted the holy feelings that filled him, to the crowd present. He himself danced the whole of the long wintry night, without feeling any exhaustion. His bhaktas forgot altogether that they had come to take the Lord back, and danced with him. Nay, the vast crowd was also moved to take part in the dance. Soon a large number of kholes and cymbals appeared on the scene, and different Kirtan parties were formed. In this manner, thousands, who surrounded the Lord, danced in the name of Hari, and in this holy occupation passed the whole night.

At daybreak they all became a little sober. The Lord sat down and the bhaktas too. He then addressed his uncle, Chandra Shekhar, saying, "Uncle! to-day I hope to be released from my bondage. Kindly make all the necessary preparations."

Now Chandra Shekhar had gone to fetch him home, and not to help him in quitting it. Shachee had sent him as the only relation of Nimai, one who stood in the position of a father to him, to persuade her son to return. The Lord asked this man to assist him in making all the necessary preparations—for his renunciation! This was a little cruel, but the Lord himself did not feel that it was so. Indeed, if Shachee had been there, the Lord would have chosen her, as the most suitable person to take charge of the necessary preparations

for the ceremony. For, if the others thought that the Lord was going to make an unparalleled* sacrifice, he himself felt that he was going to do the only thing which could make him happy. He had no idea of sacrifice at all. He could not understand why others were taking his initiation so much to heart. And, that being the case, was not his mother the best party to help him in making the preparations? He knew he was going to do a duty, and he had no sympathy with those who, from purely selfish and worldly feelings, would throw obstacles in his way. He thought that the more one loved him, the more that person was bound to help him in the performance of his duty.

Chandra Shekhar thought in his mind that the Lord was a little bit cruel in asking him to make all the preparations for the ceremony of renunciation. For, he was his uncle, and had come to fetch him home, and Shachee and Vishnupriya relied more upon him than others in the work of persuading Nimai to return home. He muttered to himself: "If the old lady asked me I would have to confess that, instead of persuading him to come back, I had helped him to leave home." He thought all these things in his mind; but uncle though he was, he did not venture to utter a word. He only said, "yes, as you command."

The fact is, when a man has decided to enter the order to which Keshava belonged, he has to go through a certain ceremony, for which a good many things are required, including clothes, eatables, fruits, etc. The Lord asked Chandra Shekhar to procure everything necessary for the occasion.

* The sacrifice made by the Lord has no parallel. A youth of irresistible beauty, honoured for his learning in his native city of learned men, recognised as the Lord God by thousands of wealthy men, the only son of an old mother of sixty-seven, the husband of a devoted wife, a girl of fifteen and of exquisite beauty, and himself possessing a heart which loved every human being, his renunciation necessarily convulsed India.

Chandra Shekhar's task was, however, very much lightened by the fact that, as soon as the assembled people had heard of the matter, they one and all rushed off to carry out the wishes of the Lord. Soon the residence of Keshava was filled with the things, thus procured by the thousands of devout followers of the Lord, who wished to contribute their humble mite to the performance of the sacred ceremony. It was in this manner that articles of food and clothing, sufficent for many thousands, were collected on the spot.

The face of the Lord "shone with ecstacy;" his bhaktas sat around him, paralysed; and the vast crowd that surrounded him, were in a state of frenzy. The whole of the night they had spent in Kirtan and in holy thoughts and exercises. The word flew from mouth to mouth that Keshava had agreed to initiate the Lord, and those who had gone home for one necessary purpose or another, now came back to the spot. The news soon filled the place with many thousands of human beings. It is difficult to get a clear idea as to the number that assembled there. We are told that "the crowd was immense," that "there was a sea of human faces," that "there were hundreds of thousands," and so forth.

Did the Lord attract them? Was it his wish to save them all, these "hundreds of thousands," by presenting to them the spectacle of his renunciation? The suggestion is not a wild one. For, even the contemplation of the renunciation of the Lord has a chastening and purifying effect upon the mind even now. To those present, the sight proved an efficient antidote to all worldly feelings and an incentive to approach the lotus feet of God. How the crowd increased, is thus described. A householder, violently moved by the sight, runs back to his native village. He passes through other villages on his way home; and as he proceeds, calls on the villagers,—men, women and children,—to come and witness the renunciation of Pundit Nimai, the Avatar of Nadia.

This man, frenzied by the sight of the spectacle, does all this. Those who hear his invitation, are themselves similarly affected. They see his wild look, hear his voice full of emotion, imbibe the spirit that he carries with him, and so are affected like him. Therefore they leave their homes and their business, to run to the spot.

Passes a villager by the hermitage of Keshava Bharati by chance. He sees the outskirts of the vast crowd, and inquires the reason of the gathering. He is simply told that Keshava Bharati has agreed to initiate Nimai Pundit. But who is Keshava and who is Nimai, and why do you all come here? asks he. What is to me or to you if one, calling himself Nimai, chooses to enter the order of Sannyasee? He asks the above questions and gets no satisfactory reply. But his wonder increases, as he enters into the middle of the crowd. He sees that thousands have formed themselves into Kirtan parties, and being filed with bhakti, are acting like mad men under the impulse of their feelings. Some are rolling on the ground, some weeping, some laughing, some dancing, some embracing others in the excess of their emotion, etc. He does not understand all these movements on the part of his fellows. Bewildered, he moves about listlessly, and is at last overtaken by the spirit that inspires the vast assembly there. He catches the contagion and himself begins to act like the others.

Two contradictory feelings moved the vast crowd. Of the two feelings, one was holy, and the other worldly. Influenced by the latter feeling, they sought to restrain the Master from joining the order of the Sannyasees, and wept in sorrow. The source of this feeling was the stranger from Nadia, the would-be ascetic. They saw his lovely face, they thought of the sacrifices that he was about to make, and wept in sympathy. But, on the other hand, the example of the Lord filled them with the holiest of feelings, and so they danced with joy. Thus, when overpowered by worldly feelings, they wept and sought to restrain the

Lord, but when overpowered by holy feelings, they helped the Lord in his act of renunciation. And thus they all supplied him with the things, necessary for the ceremony.

When in the morning it came to be known that everything had been settled, and that there was no way of stopping the sacrifice, they all raised a bitter cry of anguish. The whole company wept and expressed the anguish of their souls in loud lamentations. Suggests a strong young man, " Why do we weep? Let us deport the Sannyasee Keshava Bharati. Let us take him to the opposite bank of the river, or let us beat him. He it is who is at the root of all the mischief. Why does he agree to initiate this young man?" The suggestion was approved of by other young men ; thereupon he and they fiercely assailed the holy man with reproaches and threats. They said that it was he who was the cause of all the trouble. Why had he agreed to initiate the young man? And why should he not now refuse to do it, and thereby please this vast multitude? The holy man said nothing in reply. And this irritated them the more. They threatened him,——they threatened to kill him!

The holy man then rose and addressed the multitude. He said: " You have suggested wisely. Kill me and thereby extricate me from this difficulty." " But what is your difficulty? You can refuse the initiation, and then there will be an end of the matter," say his assailants. The holy man explains :—" You all love the young man ; why not persuade him to give up the notion? Better make the attempt."

The suggestion seemed reasonable ; and elderly and leading men approached the Lord. They said all manner of things to persuade him to give up his idea of renouncing society ; they reminded him of his old mother, his young wife, and of the hardships of the life of a Sannyasee, and so forth. What the Lord said in reply, need not be repeated. Indeed, I fear I have already occupied more space than I had intended, in describing the renunci-

ation of the Lord, although I have not been able to put on record one-half of what has been left in writing by his companions. To proceed, however. Those who had come forward to persuade the Lord to give up his idea of renunciation, came back crest-fallen. They had gone boldly to accomplish a work which, they thought, would be an easy one; but they came back convinced that the Lord was doing nothing wrong. "What is the result of your mission?" asks the crowd. They reply: "Friends, we are all wrong, and he is right. He is doing what every one of us should do. Indeed, we are thinking of following him."

Here was a combat between worldliness and its opposite, the holy feeling of *udas*. They went to the Lord under the influence of the former feeling. But the words of the Lord had the effect of filling them with the holiest of feelings. They came back, thoroughly convinced that what the Lord was doing was not only proper, but what every man should do.

The feelings that the renunciation of the Lord evoked, are too extraordinary, too unworldly and too grand to be described in language. The incident occurred more than four hundred years ago; yet a portion of the feelings, created on that occasion, still remains. The renunciation of the Lord has been dramatized by different bhaktas, and the plays are called "Nimai Sannyas." When they are enacted, they create something like a feeling of madness in the audience. Those who have witnessed the passion plays of Jesus, exhibiting his crucifixion, can form some idea of the feelings evoked. The principal barber of the town was sent for; for, the ceremony requires that the head of the would-be Sannyasee should be shaved. The barber came, saluted the Lord, and refused to perform the duty!

"The barber refuses," was the cry raised, and the crowd was delighted. "Bravo! Haridas barber, keep to your resolution," was the shout raised. The Lord came to know of it. He

plaintively addressed Haridas the barber, saying, "Do me the service of releasing me from the world. I am impatient to go to Brindaban." But Haridas flatly refused. The sum total of all the objections of Haridas was that he had never seen such beautiful hair in his life, and that it would be desecration to shave him; that his heart was weeping at the sight, and therefore, his hand was trembling. He would cut the Lord, and thus jeopardise his salvation, &c., &c.

It took some time for the Lord to persuade the barber to do his duty, and the latter had at last to yield to the irresistible being whom none in this world could resist. And the barber sat before the Lord. This shaving is the first step; its esoteric meaning is release from the world. The hair on the head is the tie which binds a man to worldly society. Before a man is initiated, these ties must be rent asunder, that is to say, he must be shaved. Once shaved, he becomes entitled to initiation, and there is no returning to the world. And thus when the Lord and the barber sat face to face, there was an outburst from hundreds of thousands of throats. The bhaktas covered their faces with their clothes.*

But what was the attitude of the Lord at this last moment? He looked a picture of supreme happiness. Indeed, as soon as the barber began the operation, he obliged him to stop. The Lord addressed the barber, and said: "Stop a moment, please, let me have a dance." And saying this, he rose to have one! And how was that like? I cannot describe it; suffice it to say that those who witnessed it, were convinced that the Lord was in a state of joy which was not only boundless, but which was not to be found elsewhere on this earth. He danced with such grace and power that the hundreds of thousands present were carried away by ecstacy. But the Lord, recollecting the occasion, soon sat down.

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*Chaitanya Mangal.

The shaving was renewed, but the operation was again suspended. The Lord again implored the barber to give him a few minutes for a dance!

Now, when the heart is surcharged with any feeling, a copious flow of tears, or a swoon, or some other physical effect results and brings relief. A man, in the same manner, when his joy is more than his heart can contain, is either overpowered by fainting or relieves himself by a laugh, or by a dance, and so on. The Lord had to dance, to relieve himself a little of the joy that was overpowering him.

The case is simply this. Nimai is a young man of twenty-four. He has good health, beauty and education. He has an old mother of sixty-seven and a wife of fifteen, devoted to him, as his loving heart is devoted to them. Mother and wife have no one but him to cheer or protect them. He is paid actually divine honours by thousands of the highest men of the land. This young man is going, not only to renounce all the above blessings, but to lead the hardest life which imagination can paint. He is going to live beyond the pale of worldly society, forsaking all its choice blessings. This wonderful being, in the very act of renouncing all these things so dear to man, finds that his joy does not give him an opportunity of a few moments' rest to be shaved. Given all the propositions above, try to imagine the joy which overtook our Master.

I referred to the indescribable feeling produced on the occasion. One of the most important reasons for this was the attitude of the Lord. If he had shown that he was taking the renunciation to heart, his sympathisers would have suffered less. If he had shown that he was aware of the grand nature of the sacrifice that he was going to make, even then the people would have felt less for him. But not only did he show that he was not even aware of any sacrifice in his renunciation, but he showed joy in it,—a joy which knew no bounds. So, when he

asked of the barber leave for a dance, the people felt that the strange being was more than human. The spectators were then overpowered by such anguish as cannot be described. They addressed the young man, and said : "You rend our hearts by this display of joy ; weep, and that will give us relief !" A mere man can never be absolute master of himself, but Gauranga was.

By this time the barber himself was overtaken by the prevailing feeling. When the Lord, warned by Keshava that it was getting late, again sat down, the barber rose for a dance, on his own account ! He danced, and receded the while, without turning his back on the Lord, and when he had gone back a few steps, advanced again to the Lord dancing ! In this manner he moved backwards and forwards, to the wonder and delight of the bystanders. The Lord himself was delighted to see the condition of the barber. The sight was too much for him, so he himself rose and they both danced for a while, clasping each other's hands. The Lord was, however, eventually persuaded to desist in order that the operation of shaving him might be concluded. The barber sat down also, but his hand, indeed his whole body, trembled with emotion. The shaving was, however, somehow or other finished.

The Lord then proceeded to the river for his ablutions, and the whole crowd followed him, Bharati alone excepted. The bathing was done in the midst of Haribole, uttered by thousands of throats ; and the Lord returned to his guru in his wet clothes.

The Bharati stood up and offered the Lord two pieces of red-coloured rags. These two the Lord accepted with both hands, and placed them, with great reverence, on his head. And then he turned towards the crowd for permission to put on the dress of a mendicant. Said he : "My fathers and mothers ! I am now putting on the dress of a mendicant. Bless me that I may not disgrace it, and that I may get my Krishna." This movement of the Lord was, of course, followed by an outburst from the people.

The Lord then sat on the left side of the holy man, who breathed into his ears certain mystical words. The crowd had made a ring round the Lord, Keshava and the bhaktas. The crowd had now become quiet, and was watching the proceedings with all-absorbing interest. Word flew from mouth to mouth that the mystical words had been breathed into the ears of the Lord !

One other ceremony remained to be gone through. This was to give the new Sannyasee a name. He is to be born again. His relationship with his father and mother, wife and friends, ceases the moment he becomes a Sannyasee. He is not permitted even to retain his original name.

Keshava had been thinking of a name which would suit the Lord. He got it by inspiration. He then touched the breast of the Lord with the palm of his right hand, and declared : "You were Nimai Pundit, henceforth you are

"KRISHNA CHAITANYA."

The name indicates that the man who bears it, "awakens Sree Krishna in the hearts of men." No sooner had Keshava given the name than the Lord became a Sannyasee, complete in all respects.

His bhaktas then rose, and fell at his feet. Said they : "Master, Teacher, Swami, save us !" Swami means "Lord."

And when the bhaktas fell prostrate, the vast crowd followed their example. They too fell prostrate with an exclamation and a prayer : "Oh saviour of sinners, save us !"

The Lord, now gratified, rose, and, in gratitude tried to fall at the feet of his guru, Keshava ; but the latter held him up and asked for his embrace. And thus the disciple gave the guru a warm embrace. What was the result ? The guru was filled with prem, and he began to dance like a mad man ! It must be borne in mind, that any display of motion was an abomination to one of his way of thinking. The guru got his reward !

Meanwhile the crowd lustily demanded to know the name of

the Lord. They were told it was "KRISHNA CHAITANYA." They could catch only the latter; and the word "CHAITANYA" flew from mouth to mouth.

The work of the Lord was now accomplished, and he ran towards Brindaban, exclaiming, "My Krishna, I am coming!" He forgot the crowd which surrounded him, and the dear bhaktas who were sitting by him. But his progress was arrested by the dense mass of human beings who crossed his way. Though they made way for him, yet they could not do so with as much alacrity as would suit the Lord. This was an opportunity for Keshava, who had just then come to know of the departure of the Lord, to call after him, and remind him that he had left behind his mendicant's staff and cup!

The sound entered the ears of the Lord, and he regained consciousness. He came back to take the two things mentioned by his guru. He took the staff in his right hand, and the cup in his left, and now fully realized that he had become a mendicant. He stopped for a moment, and looking before him, saw the vast crowd that surrounded him. In the midst of that vast multitude he stood, towering over their heads, the tallest and fairest of them all!

He leant a little on his staff and tenderly gazed at the crowd for a moment. He then addressed them saying: "Fathers and mothers! Bless me that I may find my Krishna in Brindaban."

The crowd burst into tears.

The Lord stopped a few seconds and said again: "Fathers, mothers! bless me that I do not disgrace my order."

Of course, this increased the emotion of the crowd.

And the Lord, after a pause, continued: "I am now a mendicant. I have now claims upon your charity. Fathers and mothers, let me humbly beg of you this: Never forget Krishna!"

The crowd was powerfully affected, and loudly exclaiming, said: "No, never, never shall we forget Krishna."

It seems to me as if he were even now standing before all of us with his mendicant's cup in his hand, beseeching us never to forget Krishna. Dear reader! Realize this picture in your mind; for, it will do you good.

The audible sobs of his bhaktas attracted his attention. He saw that they were weeping bitter tears of sorrow.

For a moment he remembered Nadia, his mother, and, no doubt, his wife. He addressed Chandra Shekhar: "Father," said he, "ask my mother to forgive me, and bid them all, every one of them, to worship Krishna."

His work among his people being now accomplished, he again moved his steps towards Brindaban, exclaiming, "Krishna, beloved Lord, I am coming!" The crowd followed him, exclaiming, "Stay, Lord, stay, Master, that we may one and all follow you." And they followed him,—men, women and children. And why did they follow him? It was because all their worldly ties had been broken asunder, and the Lord was drawing them after him. They had become filled with *udas*, and no longer felt attracted by anything or anybody but the Lord. Nay, the holy man, Keshava himself, stood up and followed the Lord. Thus the bhaktas, the holy man, and the crowd followed in the wake of the fleeing Lord. The crowd loudly called upon him to proceed slowly, so that they might accompany him. The Lord, thereupon, turning his face towards them for a moment, implored them with folded hands, to return to their homes and there worship Krishna But the crowd had gone wild with excitement, and, without obeying him, still followed. They again implored the Lord to wait for them, but the Lord was then slowly entering into the state of *samadhi*, that is to say, he was cutting off his connection with the outer world completely!

CHAPTER IX.

YOGE EXPLAINED.

This state of *samadhi* is acquired by the practice of yoge. Yoge means union, and technically it means the union of the human soul with the Soul of souls, the Great Spirit, the Brahma, the God Almighty. The soul is attached to the body, and naturally feels a great attraction for it. But its real partner is the Great Soul of the universe.

The soul of man is likened to a woman, whose lover is the body, but whose husband is the Great Soul, *viz.*, God.

But she, the soul, undutifully forsakes her wedded Husband and cleaves to her gallant, the body. The object of the practice of yoge is to detach the woman (the human soul) from her lover (the human body) and re-unite her with her lawful Husband, the Great Soul, Brahma, or the Great Spirit.

Now those who practise austerities (as, for instance, the Advaitabadees) have their yoge; but those who attain to God by love and bhakti, have their yoge too. The Advaitabadees practise it in one way, and the latter in another way. The one way of attempting to detach a faithless woman from her lover is, (1) to reason with her; another way is, (2) to make her gallant disagreeable to her. The Advaitabadees follow the methods mentioned just now, in order to detach the soul (woman) from her gallant, the body. (1) They reason with their souls and persuade them to believe that their undue attraction for the

body cannot conduce to their happiness, for the body does not endure for ever. And (2) they practise all sorts of mortifications upon their bodies and thereby prevent the soul to derive any pleasure from its union therewith. The soul, thus driven to detach herself from the body, is slowly and gradually led towards the Great Spirit for the purpose of being united thereto. And this is the orthodox yoge which, originally confined to India, is now understood, at least partially, all over the world, through the kind services of the Theosophists.

But those who try to acquire God by prem (the Dvaitabadees) have their yoge too, though this is not so generally known, the popular belief being that the practice of yoge is the exclusive property of the other class of devotees, the Advaitabadees. But the methods of the Dvaitabadees are quite different. They do not try to (1) reason with their souls, or (2) subject the gallant (the body) to any mortification. But they enable the soul to obtain a view of her Great Partner and taste of His sweetness, whereby she is given an opportunity of comparing her gallant, the body, with her eternal Partner, Krishna. The result is that the woman (the soul), seeing that her husband (Sree Krishna) is incomparably more beautiful and sweeter than her gallant (the body), is led to forsake the latter and to cleave to the former. Thus, if the Advaitabadees have their yoge, so also have the bhaktas. The yoge of the former helps them to detach the soul from the body, but that of the latter enables them not only to do this, but also to lead it to Krishna. When the process of union between the human soul and the Great Soul has begun, the man thus affected attains to the state of *samadhi*. In this state all the external senses, one by one, refuse to perform their functions, and a new world opens to the senses of the mind.

The eyes of the Lord still retained their functions but his ears had become closed, so that the din and buzz of the world no longer entered them. He was impatient to go to Brindaban; un-

fortunately he had not wings for the purpose. He had only a pair of stout legs, and these he utilized to the best of his ability. When the Lord ran, there was not a man in the world, capable of keeping up with him. So the crowd, including the Bharati and the bhaktas, had to fall back.

Of the latter, only four succeeded in keeping him in sight, which they did with great difficulty; these were Nitai, Chandra Shekhar, Mukunda and Govinda. The Lord entered the jungles beyond the town, and the four devotees followed him. They implored the Lord to go a little slower to enable them to follow him, but their words did not enter his ears. Night came and still they followed the Lord; but for all their mighty efforts they could retain only a glimpse of the distant figure of the Lord flying before them. Nitai shouted after the Lord in a voice broken with emotion, saying: "Brother, my dear brother! Thou hast honoured me by calling me thy elder brother; stop for a few moments, and take us along with thee." But he literally cried in wilderness. And then Nitai muttered, "fool that I am to call him brother! He is no longer my brother. He is now Master and Teacher. He is now a Sannyasee, having cut himself off from all tender ties. He is certainly not to be detained now by endearing terms. Let me address him properly." So he shouted again: "Lord, Saviour, Master, the Friend of the sinner, Oh thou Support of the fallen, Oh thou All-mercy to the afflicted, it is sinful Nitai who calls thee! Wait a moment; else we cannot follow thee." But the words did not enter the ears of the Lord.

They had all fasted the previous day and the day before that, the Lord included, and now they passed a whole night in following the Lord through the jungles. Morning appeared. The Lord was instinctively flying due west towards Brindaban. He knew not the way, neither did he inquire. He would have left the bhaktas behind if he had not met with frequent obstructions.

In the beginning the crowd obstructed him, then the jungles, and then rivulets, canals and marshes. All these obstacles enabled the bhaktas to keep him in sight. But they were nevertheless far in the rear, and there was no chance of a talk with their Master. The whole of that day the Lord continued still to run as fast as he was able. His difficulty was his body, which he had to carry with him. He was flying as if for life, and the bhaktas, who had not his holy feeling to sustain them, could not keep up with him.

In those days a four or five days' fast was not a rare affair. Many men and women could accomplish it. Even now the Jains and the Hindus have the power, though perhaps not to the same extent as they had formerly. The Lord had fasted absolutely for three days, but he had been all the while living in the love of God, which nourished every fibre of his body; consequently he did not show any signs of exhaustion. On the other hand the bhaktas, who had shared his fast, not being buoyed up with a love comparable to his, hour by hour grew more and more exhausted. Evening approached and,—at length,—the Lord disappeared!

The bhaktas, in a state of despair and anguish, entered the village where the Lord seemed to have vanished. It was then night. They inquired of every one whether they had seen "a young Sannyasee of indescribable beauty running that way." No one could give any information. They felt themselves paralyzed and they could go no further. Hitherto the sight of the Lord had kept up their spirits, but now his disappearance made them lose heart and they wept in bitter anguish of soul. "Oh Lord," they cried, "do not forsake us. Thou art life, and we cannot live without thee. Didst thou not tell us that thou wouldst never forsake thy devotees?" Though urged by the villagers to partake of their hospitality, they refused. They would not take a drop of water, till they had seen their Master.

They passed the night in prayer. Night had almost ended when they heard a plaintive sound in the distance, as if some woman was weeping in distress. What is that ?—they ask of one another. Is not that the voice of our Master ? Who else could wail like that ? Certainly no one in the world. There is no one besides him in the world who can infuse such pathos into his voice. They flew towards the spot. The sound carried them away from the village into the fields, and finally to a banyan tree. It was bitterly cold and the morning twilight disclosed the figure of the Lord sitting beneath the tree !

He had, on the previous day, dropt his staff and cup, but the bhaktas had picked them up. His body was naked, and exposed to the cold. But the cold had no visible effect upon him. He was sitting there with a piece of rag wrapped round his loins, his head resting on the palm of his left hand, and his back leaning against the trunk of the tree. And he was weeping in a voice which could be heard from a long distance. It has been repeatedly stated by his bhaktas that the pathos of his weeping would melt the hardest rock. Such a plaintive voice had never been heard in this world before ; it always proved irresistible. Indeed, man or beast, matter or spirit, naught could withstand it. And it was in this pathetic voice that he was weeping.

And, dear reader, do you know, why ? Not for wife or mother or society or for personal comforts. He was weeping as a devoted and bereaved wife who had just lost her husband would, in a paroxysm of grief, and in words like these: "My Krishna! don't forsake me. I cannot longer live without Thee. If I have offended Thee, yet considering that Thou art merciful and that I am Thy child, forgive me."*

Dear reader, picture to yourself the scene. This young man weeping for Krishna, forgetful of the fact that he had renounced

* Chaitanya Bhagabat.

everything that man holds dear on this earth ; forgetful of the fact that for three days and nights he had not tasted a grain of rice or a drop of water ; and forgetful of the fact that he was alone, almost nude, without food and drink for four days and nights, under the shelter of a tree, passing his night without protection in the bitter cold of January—picture all this to your mind, and you will then understand why this Being extorted divine honours from an intelligent race which value salvation above all.

It seems to me that this is a feat of devotion to God, performed by the Lord, which has not only no parallel, but which could never have been even conceived by man. One has to realize the scene, described above, to feel why I say that, it is a feat of devotion to God which has no parallel. Of course, the allegation is on record that men have given their lives for the sake of God. Vaishnavas, however, believe that martyrdom is not possible, and that the man who really gives his life for God is somehow or other protected by Him. They say that the so-called martyrs of the world were moved more by vanity and pride than by piety. Of course, Jesus was crucified ; but he had to be bled to save mankind. Assuming, however, that there were men who actually gave up their lives purely from piety, yet, we think, it is more easy by far to sacrifice life for God than to accomplish the one performed by Lord Gauranga on this occasion. Only realize all the circumstances and then you will possibly agree with me, when I say that it is a feat which has no parallel.

The tree under which the Lord sat exists to this day. It is a sacred spot, and an Image of Gauranga has been set up there. The Image is in the charge of a Vaishnava, and the place is a shrine where pilgrims flock to purify themselves.

The bhaktas were overjoyed to find the Lord, but the scene before them almost broke their hearts. Said Nitai, addressing the Master, "Do you want to save mankind? The picture that you present will not save them but kill them." But the words

did not enter the ears of the Lord. But being thus disturbed, he instinctively rose to proceed on his way. A difficulty confronted him. Step by step he was losing the service of his eyes, as he had long before lost that of his ears, and at last he ceased to see altogether!

I have spoken already of *samadhi* and yoge. The soul of the Lord had turned in upon itself, and consequently all his external senses were gradually losing their powers. He first lost the use of his ears, and now that of his eyes. The bhaktas saw that the pupils of the Lord's eyes had almost disappeared behind the upper lids, only leaving a portion of the white visible; and so far as they still remained visible, they were lustreless and lifeless. The bhaktas were led to examine the eyes of the Lord because they found that he was feeling his way and subjected to frequent falls. The bhaktas were now enabled to follow him closely. The Chaitanya Chandroday describes the then condition of the Lord in these words: "He was just then in the state of complete *samadhi*. The external world was lost to him, though his soul was perfectly alive with the idea that he was going to Brindaban to worship Krishna. His pupils had disappeared behind the upper lids, and he had to feel his way. The result was that he had frequent falls." The sight lacerated the hearts of the bhaktas, and Nitai stood behind the Lord to prevent his falling; but his efforts nevertheless were not always successful. By these falls his gold-hued body was besmeared with dust, but that was a small matter. It seemed to the bhaktas that the falls would hurt him, and they groaned at every such mishap which they failed to prevent. "Sometimes," said the Chandroday, "the Lord in this manner entered hollows filled with water," and then he was led back by his bhaktas.

This was a condition in which they had never seen the Lord before. In death-like swoons he gave no indication of life; indeed, he then even ceased to breathe. But now, though his ears

and eyes and perhaps other senses had become paralysed, he was yet walking on his legs, and thinking in his mind!

The followers had one great difficulty which the reader must understand. Their Master was absolutely wilful, and they did not know what he would do if he regained his consciousness. The probability was that, if on regaining his consciousness he saw that the bhaktas were following him, he would take dire offence and bid them go home. And, moreover, he would then perhaps literally fly to Brindaban, and the bhaktas would not be able to follow him. So his loss of consciousness was an advantage to them, and they feared to arouse him by too much attention. They had then no definite plan as to what they would do next. But they were with the Lord which was a pleasure; and they had hopes that something favourable would turn up.

The bhaktas, of course, were now closely following the Lord. They heard the Lord speaking, reciting to himself, a sloka (couplet) from the Sreemat Bhagabat. A Brahmin, after leading a worldly life, resolved to spend his last days in Brindaban in the worship of Krishna. And in the couplet, which the Lord was reciting, the Brahmin is praised for his laudable resolve. The Lord repeated the sloka (which I need not insert here), and then commented upon it in these words: "Praised be the Brahmin; his resolve was wise. Everyone should follow it." The Lord stopped for a while, and then again repeated the sloka, and again commented upon it.

Let us explain the situation. The external world had disappeared to the Lord, and his soul was engrossed with the story of the Brahmin who had left society to pass his closing days at Brindaban, in the worship of Krishna. The incident possessed his soul for the moment, and he was thinking of the Brahmin, praising his resolve, and repeating the sloka, now and then. Yet such was the deep *samadhi* that had overtaken him, that the bhaktas doubted whether he would again come to his senses

at all. When they saw that the Lord was proceeding like a blind man and sustaining injuries and receiving hurts through his frequent falls, they sought to rouse him, but without success. How glad they would have been if they had only been able to induce the Lord to drink a drop of water! Of course, they too were fasting, but they forgot their own sorrows in the supposed sufferings of the Lord.

There was one lucky circumstance. Though the Lord had run with all his might, he had not been able to proceed very far away from home. For while he started by advancing towards the west, such were the difficulties of the country that, even when he could see, he could not always maintain the desired direction, but sometimes went some distance to the left or the right, or even returned for a short distance in the direction from which he had originally set forth. Whilst his sight remained intact, however, he always ultimately returned to the right tract. But being now blind he was utterly helpless, and had no notion in what direction he was proceeding. So that while his goal was towards the west, he was constantly changing his direction and in this manner failed to make any progress whatever. On the contrary, it was observed that he was rather coming nearer home than otherwise.

The Chaitanya Mangal here suggests an idea. It says that the Lord, irresistible as he was, found himself obstructed in his progress by—Vishnupriya. The author, Lochan Das, says, that while the Lord was roaming in the district of Burdwan on his way to Brindaban, Vishnupriya was praying to him. The bitter anguish of her soul, her tears, her prayers, her misery, all took material shape and fastened the Lord to the spot, so that he could not proceed on his way. For, says Lochan, is not love stronger than all besides,—love by which God Almighty could be made a serving friend? Is not the love of Vishnupriya as pure as a gem? The Lord, therefore, could not proceed, when restrained by the irressistible attraction of his wife.

Here I am suddenly reminded of Shachee, Vishnupriya and the bhaktas, whom the Lord had left desolate in Nadia. We had forgotten them in following the Lord. But what is the good of describing how they succeeded in living in the absence of any news of the Lord? Suffice it to mention here that they remained utterly ignorant of what had happened to the Lord. They all fasted, even Vishnupriya, and refused even to touch a drop of water. Vishnupriya lay on the bare ground under the couch in which she had passed her happiest nights and the last happy night in her life. Nay, she retained on her person evidences of the manner in which the Lord had dressed her on that memorable night. She and her mother were sighing and sobbing for the Lord, while the Lord was sighing and sobbing for Krishna. Their eyes were directed towards Katwa, where the Lord was supposed to have gone, while those of the Lord were directed towards Brindaban. They had no thought of any one besides him, whilst the Lord had no thought of them, but only of Krishna! He was running with all his might towards Brindaban, while they were attracting him with all their might back towards themselves. Hence the Lord's inability to make much progress. He had, however, by this time got to within ten or twelve miles of Nadia.

While the Lord was going about, another day and night passed, the Lord never acquiring consciousness and still engrossed with the tale of the Brahmin who had resolved to forsake society for Brindaban in order to worship Krishna. On the fifth day from the day the Lord had left home, he was passing through an open space where a good many cows were grazing, with a few boys tending them. They saw the Lord, and whether his presence inspired them with the idea, or, as one author says, Nitai instructed them, they all raised a shout of Haribole. Uttered thus in the open plain, this exclamation, always irresistibly sweet to the Lord, broke down the barrier that had obstructed his hear-

ing; and the Lord, startled by the strange sound, suddenly stopped and looked anxiously about him. He stopped for the first time deliberately, to learn from whence it had come. Seeing this, the boys, either encouraged by Nitai or of their own accord, repeated the Haribole one after the other.

The Lord, for the first time, after his complete *samadhi*, opened his eyes. They were directed towards the spot from which the sweet sounds came. The bhaktas were standing behind, but he had no knowledge of their presence. Indeed, they had then no intention of disclosing themselves to the Lord lest he, offended by their presence, should bid them return, while he himself ran on towards Brindaban. So they covered their heads with their clothes to conceal their faces. But these precautions were absolutely unnecessary, for, the Lord was as yet not in a condition to be able to recognize them.

He saw that a few cow-boys were uttering the Haribole, and not only uttering it, but in their childish joy, dancing! The sight was too much for him; and he proceeded towards them. As he proceeded, he beckoned them to come near. He and they met. He touched the forehead of the foremost, who was the leader, and said: "Where did you learn the sweet name of Hari, pray? Who taught you? Do you belong to Brindaban?" These cow-boys could not understand him. He then suggested an answer to his question. He said to himself: "These cow-boys * must belong to Brindaban or its outskirts. Where is the wonder in cow-boys in or near Brindaban being familiar with the sweet name of Hari?" The idea then entered the mind of the Lord that he was nearing Brindaban, though the sacred place was about sixty days' journey from Nadia, and he was about, say, ten or twelve miles from that city!

He gently stroked the head of the first boy, and accosted them all in these words: "You are all nice boys, and no doubt

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* See cow-boys, Krishna-leela, Vol. I, page XXII.

beloved of Krishna. You know not my obligation to you. My ears were fasting, for, I had not heard the sweet name of the Lord (Hari) for many days, and you know not what good you have done me by repeating it. My good boys, to tell you the truth, I was dying; but the sweet name has brought me back to life. Do oblige me by repeating it once more."

Now ordinary men feel the pangs of death when they are obliged to fast, or when they are scorched to death under a blazing sun, or benumbed by the bitter cold of a wintry night. They feel that they are dying, if they do not get a drop of water to slake their burning thirst, or a morsel of food to appease their hunger. And if they do not get, say, a wink of sleep for a night, do they not also feel that they are dying?

People also feel something like the pangs of death when they are overtaken by great misery. A man, suddenly deprived of all his property, finds himself a beggar in the street; a man who has suddenly lost all the dear ones that he possessed in this world, or a man who finds himself suddenly exiled not only from his home but from his country to live in a wilderness, may feel that he is dying. But Lord Gauranga was not a being to die of such trifling matters.

His exile, voluntary as it was, from his native place or home, was not killing him. The sudden loss of all his property and all his dear ones had not hurt him in the least. Five successive days and nights without food, without a drop of water or a wink of sleep; his ceaseless wandering had not only not hurt him but had not even disturbed his equanimity. We, ordinary men, might have thought, like the Lord, of the Brahmin who had taken the wise resolution, and have felt very much attracted by his example; but a sudden fall or knock would have disturbed our thoughts and led us to forget him and think only of our own suffering. But all the sufferings of the Lord, described above, had so little effect upon him that they had not been able to drive even the idea of

the Brahmin from his mind. Indeed, if Shachee and Vishnupriya, his bhaktas and the world, were weeping for him, he himself had no sorrow except one, *viz.*, that he had not heard the name of Hari for days—that was his expression! All his sufferings, the least of which would have maddened with grief the strongest of men, had no effect upon him whatever. Yet he was dying and dying fast, and why? Because he had not,—for days—heard the name of Hari!

Hitherto nothing had been able to distress him, even to rouse him from his reverie. But the sound of Haribole brought him back to consciousness, and he approached those who had uttered it with deep gratitude and a heart filled with joy. And he said—"I was dying, but you have brought me back to life."

And thus Lord Gauranga is considered not a man like ourselves, even by those who do not admit his divinity. The world it seems to me, cannot offer a parallel to this incident of the Lord, whom nothing else had been able to rouse from his abstraction —not even the greatest of sufferings,—running to the cow-boys to express his gratitude, on hearing them pronounce the name of Hari.*

The boys repeated the Haribole, for, cow-boys though they were, they too were powerfully moved by all that they saw. The Lord was not yet satisfied, and he requested them to repeat the name once more. And they did so.

The Lord had then regained consciousness to some extent. Indeed, the state of the Lord, according to the bhaktas, was divided into three stages, *viz.*, the conscious, the half-conscious,

* Here is another incident which we would request our readers to realize in their minds. It will give one some faint idea of the feeling of prem for the Lord God which exercised the minds of Sree Gauranga. Who cannot help feeling violently affected at the spectacle of a Being, in spite of all his sufferings, gently stroking the head of a cow-boy in gratitude as he had uttered the name of Hari which he had not heard for so many days! While other Messiahs taught love of God by precept, Lord Gauranga did it by practising.

and the unconscious. The Lord now returned to what is called his half-conscious state. When the cow-boys had finished, the Lord blessed them, and then asked them the way to Brindaban.

Here was an opportunity for Nitai. He and the others were standing behind—it was morning, or rather the forenoon,—quite sure that the Lord would take no notice of them. When the Lord asked the boys to point out to him the road to Brindaban, Nitai, from behind the Lord, made a sign to them, to point out the Santipur road. The cow-boys understood the sign, and they showed the path leading to the town of Santipur. Thus directed by the boys, the Lord took that road and followed it with open eyes and bent head.

Nitai here took counsel with Chandra Shekhar. He proposed that Chandra Shekhar should at once proceed to Santipur, and ask Advaita to wait with a boat on this side of the river. "Some how or other, I shall," continued Nitai, "lead the Lord to that place. If you do not find Advaita at Santipur, go on at once to Nadia and ask him to carry out the request." Santipur was on the eastern bank of the Bhagirathee, and the Lord was on the other or western bank.

The Lord took the Santipur road and the remaining bhaktas followed Nitai closely, Chandra Shekhar leaving them for Santipur by a side-path. It was noticeable that the Lord had not forgotten the Brahmin; for, left to himself, he again repeated the sloka to comment on it. Nitai had studied the Lord as a mother does her child or a wife her husband. He understood the different moods of the Lord and the states through which he passed. He felt that the Lord was gradually, though slowly, recovering his consciousness. So, as he followed the Lord, he began to manifest his presence to him by various means, such as coughing, etc., in order to draw his attention to himself. But the Lord as yet took no notice of the particular person who was behind him. He only perceived that a man was following him, and he also felt,

perhaps, that this man was desirous of being spoken to by him. So without turning his head, he asked a question. "Can you tell me," he said, "how far is Brindaban from here ?"

Nitai perceived that the Lord had come to feel his presence, and had asked a question expecting to receive an answer. The question brought to Nitai's mind an idea with the speed of lightning. He perceived from the question of the Lord that the notion had taken possession of his mind that he had come very near Brindaban. And so to keep up the delusion, he answered from behind, as a stranger would do, "Brindaban is not very far from here ; we have come very near it."

The Lord was satisfied with the answer, but he did not think it worth his while to look behind to see who had spoken to him. The fact is, he was "swimming in an ocean of joy" at the idea of following in the wake of the Brahmin, that is to say, of passing his days in Brindaban, in the worship of Krishna. So he had no place for curiosity in his mind. The Lord, without taking any notice of the man who had replied to his question, proceeded on his way.

Nitai now thought that the Lord had probably acquired so much consciousness as to be able to recognise him. Thinking thus, he suddenly confronted the Lord and saluted him !

The Lord thus confronted, raised his head, for, he had been walking with his head down, and fixed his lovely and lustrous eyes upon the face of Nitai.

Their eyes met. Nitai would have burst into tears, but with great effort he conquered his feelings. This was the first time that he and the Lord had met since the renunciation. His heart had been lacerated by divers feelings, and these all now appeared with renewed vigour to lacerate it once more. But he had to carry out an idea and was compelled, therefore, to check the outburst. The Lord examined the face of Nitai in doubt and curiosity. He at last stammered out—"It seems--it seems,

I—I have seen you somewhere, your face seems familiar to me."

Nitai with a forced smile of recognition, interrupted the Lord, saying—Do you not recognise your slave, the sinful and fallen Nitai?

The Lord.—"Can it be possible that you are Sreepad? But how can that be? I left you in Bengal, now I am nearing Brindaban. How came you to be here?

Nitai.—Knowing that you were going to Brindaban, I followed you, my lord.

The Lord.—Can that be possible? You have done well. Would it not be supreme happiness for us to worship Sree Krishna together in Brindaban?

And the idea gave the Lord inexpressible joy. "But," continued the Lord, "you know the way, for you have been there already; please lead me thither."

And thus Nitai obtained what he wanted. He now led the Lord towards Santipur. His idea was to lead the Lord to the river where he expected Advaita to be waiting for them. He believed that he and Advaita would be able to lead the Lord back to Santipur, so that at least he might break his fast. And Nitai led the way and the Lord followed.

Said the Lord after a time: Will it not be supreme happiness for both of us to spend our days in the jungles of Brindaban, worshipping Krishna?

Nitai.—Certainly.

The Lord.—And we shall tread on the identical spot sanctified by the touch of the lotus feet of Radha and Krishna. And when hungry we shall live upon Madhukaree.* And with a piece of rag tied round our loins, the garb of a beggar, we shall

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* From *Madhukar*, a bee. A man who lives upon *Madhukaree* has the privilege of gathering food like a bee, but from only five householders. He must be satisfied with what is voluntarily given to him by these five householders.

ask of the denizens of Brindaban,—men, women, animals, trees, shrubs and creepers,—to tell us where Radha-Krishna once sported: Will not that be supreme happiness?

Nitai nodded assent. He did not like all this talk. He thought that the transcendental fancies of the Lord would perhaps lead him to enter into his ecstatic state again, when he would be as unmanageable as he was before. The Lord, not much encouraged by Nitai in his talk about Brindaban, stopped. But his heart was full of the subject, and though he promised to himself to remain quiet, he could not. So again he broke out—" Dear Sreepad! Do you think that Sree Krishna will show Himself to me?"

As I said before, Nitai apprehended danger from such talk, and he wanted to stop it. So he replied, this time rather angrily. He said—"My Lord! You live upon Krishna-prem and you have no physical wants. But we, poor mortals, have to satisfy our hunger and thirst. I am both hungry and thirsty. Let me first satisfy my physical wants and then we shall have a talk about Krishna." Nitai's idea was that by reminding the Lord of his own physical wants, he might possibly rouse the like feelings in the Lord. And if the Lord could be made to feel a little for his physical wants, the probability was that his spiritual wants would cease to exercise the same influence over him that they were doing just then. Seeing Nitai a little out of humour, the Lord stopped. He, however, broke out again with the remark, though afraid lest he should again offend his companion. He asked: " How far is Brindaban from here?"

Nitai.—"We are nearing it." And the conversation again stopped, Nitai leading the way and the Lord following. Just then the broad bosom of the Bhagirathee became faintly visible. At every step, Nitai was gaining heart. He felt almost sure of finding Advaita there, and was confident that he and Advaita together would be able to control the movements of the Lord.

The Lord again interrupted the silence by a question. For, was he not very impatient to get to Brindaban, and had he not heard that he was nearing the sacred place? He asked: "You said, we are nearing Brindaban, but you did not give me an accurate idea as to how far it is from here."

Nitai was almost sure of success. So he turned towards the Lord and asked him to look before him and see the bosom of a river.

"Do you see it?" asked Nitai.

The Lord with a little effort saw it looming in the distance; and asked Nitai what the river was called. Nitai answered that it was Jamuna. Of course, our readers know that the Jamuna flows past Brindaban.

The Lord heard the news with incredulity and wonder mixed with pleasure. "That is the Jamuna! Are you joking? Is that the Jamuna?"

"Yes, that is the Jamuna as sure as I am Nitai," replied Nitai with great emphasis!

The Lord only took a moment to consider. And then he ran towards the river, exclaiming, "Thou Jamuna! Thou Bhakti-giving Jamuna! bless me." The five days' successive fast, toil and want of sleep had told upon his system; and so he had been walking slowly. But on hearing that the Jamuna was before him, he regained all his strength and ran with the speed of lightning. Nitai tried his best to follow him, but could not keep up with the Lord, who ran and ran till he reached the Bhagirathee into which he threw himself headlong. After the plunge he returned to the bank and stood there with his eyes shut and both hands over his head, shedding tears of joy. That Advaita was waiting for him on that bathing-place with a boat, he did not notice. Nor could Advaita at first recognise that it was the Lord who had taken the plunge. This was because the Lord had shaved his head and put the cloth of the anchorite round his loins.

But while he was considering who the Sannyasee might be who was there, Nitai appeared on the scene. And then Advaita knew that it was the Lord who was standing before him. He then approached the Lord slowly, but his legs refused to move and his heart failed. He burst out into loud lamentations!

And is this our Lord, thought he, that beautiful youth who soothed the eyes of men and women by his charms? And is this the being who only the other day was more tenderly nursed than a prince? The sudden appearance of the Lord in the garb of a poor anchorite affected him so powerfully that he could not contain himself, and was obliged to give way to his feelings in loud bewailings.

The Lord was in the happiest mood, tears of joy were trickling down his cheeks, for he had at last reached, as he thought, Brindaban. The cry of distress from Advaita, therefore, jarred on his ears, and he opened his eyes to see what the matter was.

He opened his eyes and saw Advaita before him, and Nitai standing by the latter. "Is it you, Acharjya?" asked the Lord of Advaita, and the latter suppressed his tears as he answered, "yes." The reply gave the Lord infinite pleasure. So both his principal companions were there, and he exclaimed in gladness: "It is exceedingly fortunate. Now we three shall pass our days in Brindaban in worshipping Krishna."

Now this language, Advaita did not understand; he had no notion of the trick that Nitai had played upon the Lord. So while he was thinking of the true import of the language of the Lord, he was again startled by a question from him. "But how did you come here? How did you come to Brindaban before me?" The question still mystified Advaita. He hesitated in giving his reply and looked to Nitai for explanation. This attitude on the part of Advaita led the Lord to think and look around him, and he regained his full consciousness at once!

In short, the whole trick played upon him was suddenly disclosed to the Lord. He saw that the river before him was the Bhagirathee and not the Jamuna, and the town on the other bank was Santipur.

The knowledge gave a great shock to the Lord. He had left everything behind to proceed to Brindaban, where he expected to find his Krishna. After much toil, he thought he had obtained the highest desire of his life. At the last moment he came to know that he had been deceived and brought back.

Deeply mortified as he was, yet he expressed himself in gentle language. Neither anger nor rude words had any place in his heart.

He said, addressing both Nitai and Advaita: "This is not the Jamuna, but the Bhagirathee, and the town that I see on the other bank is Santipur. So, Sreepad, my dear brother, you have played a trick upon me! Is it a proper act? And is this the way you treat a younger brother? Alas! Alas! I became a Sannyasee to obtain my Krishna, but you, brother, have stood in my way. Is it acting like a brother to do as you have done?"

Nitai hung down his head in shame, and did not venture a reply.

But Advaita took his side. He now clearly understood the situation, namely, that Nitai had led the Lord towards Santipur by a stratagem. Advaita said: "There was no trick, my Lord. No human being can play any trick upon you. It is said in our sacred books that the Jamuna passes by the Western bank of the Bhagirathee, so if the shastras are to be believed you have bathed in the Jamuna."

"But I was led to believe also that this was Brindaban," said the Lord somewhat angrily. "That was at least deception."

Advaita replied: "And is it not Brindaban? Wherever you are, is Brindaban. Who can deny that?" And he uttered two texts from the sacred book, showing that the Jamuna flows by the

Western bank of the river Bhagirathee and that wherever Sree Krishna happens to be present, it is Brindaban. "But, my Lord," continued Advaita, "everything is ordained by you; no man can do anything without your sanction. You have come back to save our lives. All your people are dying and you yourself have been fasting these five days." This he had heard from Chandra Shekhar. Saying this, Advaita caught hold of the right hand of the Lord to lead him to the boat.

The Lord offered resistance and refused to go. He said, "you all have made me a tool; I cannot do anything that I wish. See the fun! I was going to Brindâban and now I am at Santipur." And the Lord again looked angrily at Nitai.

Nitai now mustered courage. He replied to the complaint of the Lord: "My Lord," said he, "these five days we have not slept a wink, tasted a morsel of food or touched a drop of water. You who can live only upon Krishna-prem can do without any of these, but we are men of flesh and blood. So let us go and have a good dinner at Advaita's. But that is not it. They are all dying, only let them have a look at you. Yes, I have deceived you and I am prepared to receive cheerfully my due share of punishment for this from Krishna." Advaita repeated his invitation and then the Lord yielded, and was safely conducted to the boat.

When the boat had left the bank, Nitai felt relieved of the serious responsibilities with which he had felt himself weighted. He then found an opportunity of giving play to his natural love of humour. He looked at Advaita and said: "These five days we all have been fasting and weeping. Of course, the Lord does not care, but we do. You are inviting me to your house. But you must be prepared to satisfy my appetite which, if I may trust my feelings, will be a serious matter with you; for I will need a large quantity of rice."

Advaita was not in a gay humour. He looked gratefully at Nitai and said, "the service that you have done us is more valuable than anything I can offer you." Says Nitai: "Here we are on the sacred bosom of the river Ganga. Swear that you will give me as much as I want. I remember that to dine at your house is to fast." Well, while engaged in this agreeable conversation, they reached Santipur. The Lord and Nitai were immediately treated with *persad*, as also the others who followed them. Both the Lord and Nitai were led by Advaita to the sleeping-room, and Advaita wanted to shampoo the feet of the former. Now, this was menial service, which disciples are permitted to perform for their Guru and every householder for a Sannyasee. The Lord had now become a Sannyasee, and, therefore, an object of veneration to Advaita who was merely a householder. But when Advaita expressed a desire to shampoo his feet, the Lord expressed his disapproval, and replied a little angrily: "I have become a dancing doll in your hands. Pray excuse me from this service, and remember that I do not wish to be treated as if I were an imbecile." The fact was, the trick that Nitai had played upon him was yet rankling in his mind.

Evening approached and then the Arati, or worship by light, was performed. During the ceremony the followers of Advaita flocked to his house with *kholes* and cymbals. Advaita wanted to show the Lord how he had taught kirtan to his followers. The Lord and Nitai sat in his verandah to watch, while Advaita led the kirtan. He began with a famous song of the illustrious Bidyapati, in which Radha is made to address her maid thus:—

"My beloved Krishna is come at last;
And my joy knows no bounds.
I will never more allow my beloved to leave me.
Now is the time for the moon to rise,
Now is the time for the birds to sing, etc."

Of course, the allusion is to the lost Lord, who had been found. The Lord heard the song, but it did not touch his heart. At this moment Mukunda sang :—

" Friend ! the pangs of separation from Krishna are acting like a poison which has permeated my system and is killing me. Where shall I go to obtain my Krishna ? Who will furnish me with wings to reach Krishna ? etc. etc. etc."

This song met with a response in the heart of the Lord, who fell down in a swoon, whereupon they all flocked round him to restore him to consciousness. This was accomplished after a while, and the Lord, drunk with joy, then got up to dance. Thereupon Nitai also rose for the purpose of supporting the Lord, if he should again threaten to fall down in a swoon. Advaita, however, did not like this. The Lord had taken his meal after five days of fasting, and Advaita's wish was that he (the Lord) should retire to rest. So he stopped the kirtan, and the Lord was pursuaded to retire. And he and Nitai lay down to sleep in the same room.

Said Nitai :—Forgive me, but I have a request to make.

The Lord.—What is it ?

Nitai.—They are all dying by inches at Nadia. I would like to bring your mother and the bhaktas here for an interview with you.

The Lord took to thinking ; he said, "yes, I see, my sudden departure gave them pain. Bring them that I may take leave of them, and go with their permission. Do you know why I have not been able to go on to Brindaban ? It is because I gave them all pain by leaving them without notice."

Nitai was overjoyed at the permission given. He again asked, "whom am I to bring ?"

The Lord.—Whoever wished to come ?

Nitai.—Is that settled ?

The Lord.—Of course.

Nitai.—Whoever wished to come,—is it so ?

Nitai was thinking of Vishnupriya. The Lord perceived this, and then corrected himself saying, "bring all those who wish to come, except one."

Nitai understood that the *one* was no other than Vishnupriya.

Nitai was deeply mortified, but he did not venture a remonstrance

He left Santipur for Nadia early next morning.

CHAPTER X.

NITAI TO NADIA.

CHANDRA SHEKHAR left the Lord with Nitai, delivered the message to Advaita, and proceeded to Nadia. He had not the courage or the heart to call upon Shachee or Vishnupriya. The citizens had come to know by rumour that the Great Avatar had renounced society; but as yet no authenticated information had reached them. As for Shachee and Vishnupriya, they were in the same state as they were, when the Lord left them. They, of course, very much feared that the Lord had left them for good, though hope deceived them with the promise that he would yet come back. Elderly ladies kept guard over Shachee and tended her. But in one thing she was firm: she would not break her fast, nor even touch a drop of water till she should hear from her son.

In the same manner younger ladies gave their company to Vishnupriya. She too refrained from food and drink; and lay all night on the bare ground beside the couch where she had passed the happiest and what was destined to be the last happy night in her life with her beloved husband. She tossed about on her hard bed, moaning and muttering: "Heaven has so willed it." Is it, however, necessary to describe the sufferings of the two excellent ladies? I omit this portion, though the bhaktas have left in record ample materials for a description.

It was yet early when Nitai reached the house of the Lord. He

knocked at the door and called out to Shachee. He said: "Mother, I am come." Shachee recognized the voice, and immediately got up to inquire whether he had brought her son as he had promised.

"Yes, mother, but he is not here," said Nitai. Shachee came to the veranda, and Vishnupriya stood behind the folds of the door to hear particulars. Nitai with a great effort discharged his mission. He said: "It is too true the Lord has become a Sannyasee, but he is waiting at Advaita's hermitage in Santipur to see yourself and the bhaktas." Shachee certainly heard the first part of the message, but it is doubtful whether she heard the second; for, uttering the name of her son, she fell down in a swoon. Vishnupriya would have run to the help of her mother, but Nitai anticipated her with others who had assembled, and consequently she refrained from the attempt. She sat down dazed, stupefied, forlorn, and desolate.

Word flew from mouth to mouth that precise news about the Lord had reached the town, that he had become a Sannyasee and left society for ever. The citizens then rushed to the house of Shachee in deep sympathy, believers and non-believers, friends and enemies, and those who were indifferent but inquisitive.

Nadia was surprised at the news. The astounding sacrifice of the Lord took away their breath, removed their hostility to him, and robbed them of a portion of their own worldliness. Was ever such sacrifice seen? Was he not more than a prince? And what prince would thus sacrifice his comforts and pleasures without hope of worldly recompense? Was he not more beautiful than Kandarpa (the God of love), more learned than Saraswati (the goddess of wisdom)? Nevertheless he has voluntarily relinquished everything; and for what? A mendicant's cup and rags, and the society of wild beasts! He has left behind him bed as soft as swan's down and as white as the froth of milk, to lie on bare ground!

And therefore it came to pass that former enemies of his wept

at the thought of his tremendous sacrifice. Foes and friends alike repaired to the home of Shachee to obtain accurate information regarding the Lord and to console his bereaved family with the result that, in a short time, the house of the Lord and the quarter in which it was situated were thronged with all classes of people.

Shachee on awaking from her swoon, was startled to find that almost the whole population of Nadia had come to sympathise with her. "Glory to the mother of Nimai Pundit," said even the former opponents of the Lord. And added : " A Sannyasee in a family saves all his relations even to the fourteenth generation, and Nimai Pundit is a Sannyasee and something more ; for, is he not the greatest bhakta that the world has ever seen?" Thus the hearts of those who had derided him, were moved. So the Lord, by entering the order of Keshava Bharati, compelled his bitterest revilers to acknowledge that he had attained to a sublimity of bhakti or devotion to Krishna of which previously no one had been able to form any conception.

"Glory to the mother of the Lord, the fair Krishna, and the friend of the aggrieved and fallen," cried the bhaktas. "Glory to his wife, who will be blessed through the salvation of millions of her fellow-beings," said others.

In the midst of this tumult, Nitai was urging upon Shachee the necessity of her journeying with all haste to Santipur. "But mother," said Nitai, "you must first break your fast ; you and the lady within." Shachee would fain have refused ; but thinking that unless she broke her fast, her daughter would not do so, she agreed. Some rice was cooked hastily, which Shachee persuaded her daughter to share with her. Thus they partook of food, though only a few mouthfuls, after a complete fast of five successive days.

A litter arrived to carry Shachee. It was placed in the courtyard in the midst of a vast crowd of people who were giving

vent to their feelings by peal after peal of Horibole. As Shachee, escorted by some elderly ladies, proceeded towards the litter, a passage was made for her, through which she walked, and having reached the conveyance, she stood beside and leant upon it for a moment.

But though unpercieved by her, she was being followed by another, a lady who seemed to be young from the sound of the musical anklets which she wore. Who she was nobody could, at first, tell; for, she had covered herself entirely with a veil. Her sudden appearance on the scene created a feeling of curiosity and wonder accompanied by little commotion; for, every one present began to surmise who the figure might be. Their doubts were, however, soon dispelled, when the veiled lady, who followed Shachee, having caught hold of the skirts of her *sharee*, stood closely by her.

Thereupon all became aware that it was Vishnupriya!

When the crowd came to know that the well-dressed and completely-veiled young lady was the wife of the Lord, they were overpowered by a feeling which I will not attempt to describe. But there was no demonstration,—the feeling was too deep and sacred for that. Shachee broke the silence. In her hurry to proceed, she had, for a moment, forgotten her daughter. Nay, even Sreebas and other prominent bhaktas of the Lord, who were leading the old lady to Santipur, had also forgotten, for the time being, the existence of the young wife. Shachee saw her daughter by her side, and that was an intimation that she was anxious to accompany her. Her movements showed that she too claimed her right to go to Santipur to see her husband.

As I have just said, Shachee broke the silence. She said, "I forgot you, daughter. If I must go, you must go too."

Here Nitai intervened. He said: "Mother, Vishnupriya has not the permission of the Lord to go."

This announcement produced another sensation, though

again a silent one. Shachee said: "Then I must not go either."*

The young lady, when she heard what the wishes of her husband were, pondered for a moment; then, having formed her resolution, let go hold of the *sharee* of her mother, and leaning on the arms of her attendant maid, turned her face towards her home, amidst breathless silence. At every step she produced a sweet jingling sound, due to the musical *Panjar* that she wore on her ankles. Sweet as these sounds usually are, on this occasion they lacerated the hearts of those present.

Let not our readers think for a moment, that it was owing to a mere whim that the Lord had refused to allow her to visit him at Santipur, for the sake of a parting interview. He had taken the vow of renunciation for a grand object. To see Vishnupriya would have caused him, as a Sannyasee, to fall from his high state,—a contemptible creature, forsaken of men and of God. The Lord could not have seen her without sacrificing his mission.

Neither think you, dear reader, that the permission, denied to the wife, was regarded by her as a misfortune. The announcement first gave her a shock. She felt that if any one had suffered by the renouncement it was she, and she had, thus, the first right to go. And could it, therefore, be just that she should be refused permission to go, while almost the whole population of Nadia was running to see her lord?

But a little reflection on her part showed her that her husband had only honoured her by making her the exception. She naturally thought she must be the most important factor in this mission of her lord, more important even than his mother herself. When this idea rushed into her mind, she not only felt consoled, but gratified, nay, filled by a holy joy which more than adequately protected her from the misery which sought to overtake her. She knew that the Lord loved her, and what more could a pure

* Chandrodaya.

and devoted woman desire? She knew that her husband had a mission, and that he was the greatest of all beings that had been seen on earth.

Her husband is Sree Krishna, an Avatar, a saviour of mankind, and she suffers for her fellows, and her loving husband refuses her an interview not from any want of affection but from a sense of supreme duty.

She was filled with joy at the thought. Indeed, a celestial joy follows every noble sacrifice, to prove that there is divinity in men, and that there is a good God Who loves sacrifice.

Vishnupriya sent notice to Shachee that she should go without her to Santipur to see her son, as that was his wish. Shachee agreed; for, she realized the fact that, considering all the circumstances, it would not be proper to take Vishnupriya with her. Shachee entered the litter, and it was lifted up by bearers. Till then there was silence, but now it was broken by continued peals of Horibole by which the crowd gave vent to their pent-up feelings.

It flew from mouth to mouth that the Lord had given permission to every one to go to see him; and, as a matter of fact, the whole town, as it were, followed the litter of Shachee.

What a jewel is Bashu Ghose! His descendants flourish to this day in Dinajpur, and are all Vaishnavas, celebrated for their unparallelled piety and devotion to Lord Gauranga.* Bashu Ghose, in one of his songs, declares: "I followed Shachee to Santipur, weeping all the way." From this saintly chronicler, we get a most clear and thorough account of this part of the leela of the Lord.

As the litter proceeded towards Santipur, thousands accompanied it,—bhaktas, friends and even former scoffers of the Lord. The latter had at last come to realize that they had been unjust

* Rai Saheb Radha Govinda, the present representative, is a wealthy landlord of Dinajpur and, in every way, worthy of the saint from whom he is descended.

to the son of Shachee. His self-sacrifice created a wave of pathetic feeling throughout the country, which swept away all ill-feeling towards him. This was in places where he had not been seen and personally known. But at Nadia the citizens still more thoroughly realized the sacrifice which he had made. They had seen him, like a bride-groom, a prince, walking through the city, dressed in the richest apparel, and they now knew that he had forsaken everything to serve God. His enemies were overcome by repentance, and some of them resolved to go to Santipur and beg pardon of him for having misjudged and misrepresented him.

With peal after peal of Horibole, uttered from thousands of throats, the citizens of Nadia, with Shachee in their midst, reached Santipur. When they neared the town, they found the place thronged with tens of thousands of human beings.

The Lord had appeared in the previous afternoon. His arrival had created a stir in the town. The news passed from mouth to mouth that Pundit Nimai, after entering the order of Sannyasees, had come to Santipur. The result was that people ran to see him from all parts of the country. Early in the morning Advaita saw, to his dismay, that there was a chance of his house being thrown down by the pressure of an ever-increasing crowd, and so he hastily engaged a number of stalwart men to keep guard at his door.

The strangest part of the matter was that all these men had come there not to satisfy an idle curiosity, but had been attracted by an irresistible force to the place, for the purpose of being saved. They came, in thousands, under the influence of a strange feeling, which led them towards the Lord, with the cries of "Save us, Oh, Thou Saviour of mankind." They had, on hearing of the arrival of the Lord in their midst, been suddenly awakened to the knowledge that they had hitherto been living a very worldly, purposeless, and sinful life. They had, so they

felt, been all along deliberately paving for themselves paths to perdition. Luckily they had not died with the load of their evil karma on their heads. "Let us run to him and fall at his feet," said they; and they came, thousands and hundreds of thousands, with the cry of "Save us, Saviour of mankind," on their lips.

A song of that period will describe the feeling that pervaded the crowd—it is addressed to Lord Nimai.

"I have heard from saints that Thou art merciful, O Lord!

"I am helplessly struggling in a boundless ocean (of worldliness). Wilt Thou catch me by the hair, and lifting me into Thy boat-like foot, save me?

"For I rely on Thee alone.

"Once more, to save the fallen and the sinner, Thou hast appeared among mankind, and where wilt Thou find a greater sinner than I?

"I am a loathsome and hateful creature.

"But since Thou art an ocean of mercy,

"Rescue me, Lord, for I am sinking."

Possibly the above lines will fall flat on the ears of some of my readers. Let me try to photograph the influences that moved them. What they felt—not only felt but realized—was that they had led a worthless life, and thereby had endangered their chance of enjoying the future immortal life; that death was possible at any moment; and that, on the other hand, the means of salvation were near at hand. All the above they realized, and they ran to the Lord like mad men, or as terrified men, bitten by a deadly serpent, would run to a serpent-doctor. If, my dear reader, you can persuade yourself to feel as they did, and as they were led to do, you will like them feel a strange unrest, for having so long dissipated your energies in the pursuit of transient and worthless things. Wise, clever, intelligent and favoured as you may be in many respects, yet these men possessed this advantage over you, namely, that they were aware of their wretched condition, whereas you are not.

As every one was ambitious to see the Lord, he was led out upon the terrace of the outer house of Advaita, so that the assembled people could have a good view of him from outside. Thus the Lord was persuaded to go upstairs, show himself, and thereby satisfy the desires of the thousands that had come to be saved. He went up and stood on the terrace.

Dressed in the rude robe of a Sannyasee, the Lord looked like the personification of Bhakti. His tall stature, his finely-wrought limbs, his golden colour, his chiselled features, his soft lotus-like eyes, his mild but majestic grace, the benign expression of his noble countenance,—all betokened that he was no mere mortal denizen of this world, but a spirit descended from above for the salvation of fallen humanity.

The crowd saw his form and their eyes were rivetted on his divine face. And the wonder of wonders was that the Lord also looked every one in the face. Every one fancied that the Lord was looking at him. Every one uttered his own prayers, and every one felt that his prayers had been heard and that he had been saved. The crowd stood spell-bound, gazing at the Lord with fixed, tender, and supplicating eyes. The Lord himself broke the silence. He raised his right arm towards Heaven, and said: "Say Hari." No sooner was this done than thousands and hundreds of thousands of throats followed his bidding, and they rent the skies by peal after peal of Haribole.

Just then the citizens of Nadia appeared with Shachee in their midst. If they, at Santipur, were celebrating the occasion by peal after peal of Haribole, those of Nadia were also approaching them with the same sacred words in their mouths, and thus the Haribole of Santipur was echoed by the Haribole of Nadia.

When it came to be known that Shachee and the citizens of Nadia were coming, a passage was made for them The Lord saw from upstairs the litter which contained his mother, and he came down hurriedly to meet her. The guards at the outer door

opened a passage for the litter and the leading bhaktas to enter, and the litter was laid down in the yard.

Shachee peeped out of the conveyance. By the door of the litter stood the tall form of the Lord, with folded hands and penitent expression, as if he were an offender who had need of the forgiveness of his mother. Sreebas assisted Shachee to come out of the litter.

As the old lady came out, the Lord fell prostrate and caught her feet and touched them with his head. Now this was a thing never permitted to a Sannyasee, who is above all, and is bound by his vows not to bow down to anybody, nor to betray any tender feeling.

The first thing, therefore, that struck the old lady was that her son was doing wrong by saluting her. The garbs of a holy man, and the strong magnetism exercised by her son, took away from her, for the moment, the idea that the being before her was her own son, and therefore an inferior. She felt such a profound feeling of awe for her son that she gently uttered a word of protest and said: "Nimai, is it proper that you should salute me? You are now a holy man while I remain a worldly woman. If you salute me, you do injury. But I am a fool to speak thus. You know better what is good for me. If you knew that it would injure me by saluting me, you would never have done it."

In the midst of this rambling speech she was gradually overtaken by her maternal feelings, which had been temporarily displaced by bhakti for her son. She sat, and asked the Lord to rise.

Shachee.—Nimai, get up please, you pain me; let me see your face.

Shachee dragged her son towards her and smelt his head. She looked her son full in the face, touched his head with her hand, and said: "And Nimai, how could the cruel barber cut your hair, the pride of Nadia? And how could that cruel man, Keshava Bharati, permit a youth like you to enter his order?"

The Lord sat with folded hands before his mother. He remained silent, as if he were the most guilty man in the world, and before him, was his accuser and judge. The old lady found herself overpowered by divers feelings.

" And was it for this, Nimai," continued she, " that woman as I am and a widow, I strained my resources to give you a first-class education? How can I, your mother, bear the sight that you now present to me, wearing a rag round your loins? You are the life of my life, you whose absence I could never bear even for a moment, you that were nursed so tenderly, to think that you are now a Sannyasee, destined to seek shelter in caves and under trees, a mendicant, dependent upon charity for your daily bread?" Here the old lady stopped, choked by her emotion. After having recovered herself, she again looked reproachfully at her son, and continued: "Have you reflected upon the legacy you leave to me —that of the young girl, your wife? Tell me how am I to console her? Can a mother bear all this, and live? If your intention was to quit society, why did you not wait until I was dead?"

The Lord still sat before her like a criminal with hands folded, in token of submission. When the lady had unburthened her heart, the Lord replied slowly. He said: " Mother, I took this step in a state of frenzy. Now that you have overtaken me on my pilgrimage, have no fear that I will henceforth do anything without your permission. My body is yours, it is absolutely at your disposal. I have no right to go anywhere without your permission. It matters not that I have entered the order of Sannyasee. If you wish it, I will return to society, nay, to Nadia." And with tearful eyes he implored the old lady to forgive him. He said that he now understood how much he had pained her by his sudden departure, and would do so no more, but would henceforth abide absolutely by her advice.

When the mother and son met, the bhaktas wanted to leave them alone; but they were so deeply interested in the scene before

them that they could not. They saw the spectacle of mother and son meeting under such extraordinary circumstances, and the picture melted them. There was Advaita's wife, Seeta, waiting to lead Shachee into the apartments of the ladies. Seeta, after a time, earnestly requested the lady to accompany her. Shachee agreed, and leaning on the arm of Seeta, the mother of our Lord, in the midst of repeated exclamations of Haribole, entered the inner apartment. On seeing that Advaita's wife had made preparations for cooking the Lord's meal, she implored her hostess to allow her to cook for her son. "Let me do this service, probably the last, for my son," and Shachee set herself to prepare the necessary dishes.

As soon as Shachee had retired, the Lord found himself face to face with the bhaktas. Their appearance showed how intensely they had suffered during his absence, and the Lord embraced every one of them. Said Sreebas: "Lord! so long we have been dead, and now have come to life again." Advaita was busy providing for his numerous guests. He was a wealthy man, that is to say, he had many disciples who were wealthy. He provided separate lodging and food for all the bhaktas who had accompanied Shachee from Nadia.

Evening appeared and kirtan began. Advaita wanted to make it a grand affair. Shachee sat with Seeta on the veranda to take part in the ceremony. She sat with a heavy heart, because Vishnupriya was not by her side! The wave of feeling that was created, carried away every one present, man and woman. The Lord, as a mendicant, looked "a million times more beautiful" than when he was a householder. The fact was, the garb of a holy man in him heightened, if possible, the celestial lustre that always surrounded him. To look at him was to revere him and to be filled with a feeling of bhakti for God. This celestial being was in their presence, in the garb of a holy man,—a being whom they had lost and found. In their joy people forgot the

renunciation of the Lord and fancied that they were in the close embrace of Sree Krishna himself.

The Lord was hitherto sitting apart and watching the proceedings. But he could no longer control himself and had to join in. The feeling that had kept him unconscious for about six days, when, having left society and entered his order, he travelled in the district of Burdwan, had now completely left him. He was now in his normal state of consciousness. On his joining the kirtan, in his garb of a holy man, there was an outburst of joy from thousands of throats, both of men and women. He entered the kirtan, but as soon as he began to dance, he fell down in a swoon !

Nitai's duty was to follow behind the Lord during his dances and to prevent his falling, but he was not always successful. When the Lord fell down with a thud, Shachee shuddered. It seemed to her that the accident had fractured some of the bones of her son. She closed her eyes and began to pray to Krishna in this fashion : "Krishna, my Lord ! grant me this, that when my Nimai falls down in a swoon, he may not receive any hurt by the fall ; and at the same time deprive me of my senses in order that I may not witness it." Now Shachee never liked these kirtans, that is to say, the kirtans in which her son joined. For, she knew that they meant frequent and dangerous falls for her son. But, nevertheless, she was compelled to witness them for various reasons. They were often held at her own house, and as other ladies were used to join in them, she had to keep them company. She had, however, one remedy for this trouble of hers, *viz.*, prayer to Krishna. Her custom was to close her ears with her fingers, and shut her eyes whenever Nimai fell down in a swoon, and to pray to Krishna for His protection. Shortly afterwards she would open her eyes to see whether her son had regained consciousness or not. If she found that he had not, she would again close her ears and eyes and pray. Shachee was watching at Advaita's in

company with Seeta and other ladies of Santipur. But she was only praying to Krishna to protect her son from his falls. Shachee felt very desolate, as I said before, for, she was not only in the midst of strangers, but Vishnupriya was not with her. Murari, the chronicler of the early life of the Lord, was standing beside her. He had not heart enough to join in the kirtan, for, he loved the Lord with as much fervour as Shachee herself, and the renunciation of the Lord had been a terrible blow to him. He had suffered in consequence both in mind and body, and had not the strength for a dance. He was by the side of Shachee and watching the kirtan from there. In a song he thus describes the condition of Shachee on that occasion :

The mother could bear it no longer, says Murari ; she thought that the bhaktas were carrying the thing too far. She thought that as the night was advancing, her son should be allowed to retire to rest. But as she saw there was no chance of the kirtan stopping soon, she rose and began to call upon Nitai. "Nitai," says Shachee, "do hold my Nimai carefully so that he may not fall down." But where was Nitai ? He was in the midst of the kirtan and certainly not in a position to hear a word of what the lady was saying. Then she began loudly to call upon Advaita, and then upon the crowd in these words : "Stop your kirtan, please, it is getting late. Have you no mercy upon my child ? He is too young for all this. And do you not see that he is likely to break his bones by these falls ?" But no one listened to what she said, for, they were all drunk with joy. And Murari concludes the song with these pathetic words, addressed to the Lord by himself : "Come hither, my Lord, and see the condition of your mother !"

In this manner passed two or three days, Shachee always herself cooking his meals for her son. The Lord had told his mother that he would no longer do any thing without her permission. Of course, every one thought that the

Lord had meant nothing particular by what he had said, but the Lord himself thought otherwise. So he beckoned all the bhaktas to sit by him, and to listen to him. Said he :

"I did wrong by suddenly disappearing from you, and it was for that reason that I could not go right on to Brindaban. The grief of my mother weighed heavily on my heart, from the moment of my departure, and overcome by her sudden arrival here, I, in a moment of thoughtlessness, have made her a promise to abide by her instructions. I want now her precise order as to what I should do under the circumstances. I was never more serious in my life than when I told her that I would strictly follow her advice. Indeed, if she now advises me to give up my vow and re-enter society and return home, I am prepared to do so. I myself would have gone to her to receive my orders from her lips, but she is so devoted to me that in my presence she loses her independence. I will not, therefore, go, but will ask you to learn from her what is to be my fate. Tell her that my body is absolutely hers, and she has the freest permission to do whatever she likes with it. Nay, I repeat, if she wishes it, I will re-enter society and go back with her to Nadia."

The strange words of the Lord very much surprised the bhaktas. What does the Lord mean?—thought they. Only a week ago he became a Sannyasee, and to-day he absolutely surrenders himself to his mother. And who is this mother? A simple old lady of sixty-seven, who has no one else in the world except her world-worshipped son. If she is given the freest permission to decide the fate of the Lord, what can she do but ask him to accompany her to Nadia?

Now this would be wrong on the part of the Lord. To return to society, after taking the vows of the order of Sannyas, is not only to court ridicule and contempt and social death in this world, but almost everlasting perdition in the other. But the bhaktas were aware of the divinity of the Lord, and recognised

that he was above all human laws. They had been dying in his absence, and could not live without him ; for, they had absolutely sold themselves to him. They would not object to the Lord re-entering society, nay, they would consider such an arrangement as the best that could be made for the convenience of all. It was thus they argued amongst themselves: Our master is Sree Krishna in disguise. He has become a beggar simply to be able to soften the hearts of his creatures and sow the seed of bhakti in their hearts. And why has he become a beggar? It is to soften the hard hearts of his wretched creatures called human beings. The garb of a mendicant on the person of the Lord is therefore a libel on humanity. It is the wickedness of humanity that has compelled the Lord God to appear before them in the character of a poor mendicant to beg of them to give their love to Him. Is this not scandalous? The sooner the Lord ceases to be a Sannyasee the better for the reputation of mankind. It is for his wicked children that he has put on the garb of a mendicant. Our duty is to place our Lord on a throne of gold and worship him, instead of compelling him to beg from door to door, that his creatures may not fling Him away as a thing without worth. The proposal of the Lord, therefore, delighted them. They reflected that if Shachee is the arbitratrix of the destiny of the Lord, she will surely take him back with her to Nadia. In high spirits, therefore, the leading bhaktas, followed by others, surrounded the good mother Shachee.

They all saluted her, and Nitai, impatient to deliver the message, said at once: "Mother! we bring good news. It was not a mere compliment paid to you by the Lord when he promised that he would henceforth abide by your wishes. He was perfectly serious. Now he has sent us to know what your wishes are. What can your wishes be but that he should return to Nadia? Let us hear your decision at once, so that having come weeping to Santipur, we may go back dancing to Nadia."

Advaita looked disapprovingly at Nitai with the remark that it was not proper to exceed the instructions of the Lord. "We have no right to influence the opinion of his mother by any remark of our own. He sent us lest his own presence should, in any way, influence her against her inclination. Let us, therefore, deliver our message honestly, and allow the good lady to form her own opinion." So saying, he began:

"It is quite true," said he, addressing Shachee, "the Lord is prepared to abide by your wishes. He said that he disappeared without your permission, and, therefore, Sree Krishna punished him by bringing him back. His body belongs to you absolutely, and he has no right to dispose of it without your free permission. He now wants to know your wishes. He will abide absolutely by your instructions. Nay, if you wish it, he will give up his Sannyas, go back to Nadia, and live as a householder. So careful is he to take your unbiased opinion that lest his presence should influence your judgment, he has sent us as his representatives, so that you can form it without any disturbing influence."

The message led the old lady to hang down her head in thought! Every one expected to see evidence of happiness in her face, but they saw none there, but rather deep anxiety. This attitude of the mother surprised them all and even annoyed them. They said: "Why do you hesitate, mother? Surely you are not going to permit him to leave home?"

Shachee smiled sadly. She said: "Do you mean to say that I should now take my son home? That is simply impossible. I am only thinking what place he should go to, which will be agreeable to him and convenient for me."

The bhaktas were surprised and rather annoyed at the remark of Shachee. "And so, mother, you will cast away your son although he is willing to come back if you only desire it," said some bhaktas in deep disappointment. Shachee heard this expression of discontent on the part of the bhaktas, and smiled again.

After a while, she said : "If I now take back my son, it will, no doubt, please me and thousands and thousands of men ; but then, people will laugh at him. And that it will be impossible for both you and me to bear. But even that is a small matter. My son took a solemn and sacred vow only a week ago. He will fall spiritually by breaking it. Now, it is quite true the departure of my son may eventually kill me, but I would rather die a hundred deaths every day than stand in the way of his spiritual progress. Of course, if I had been at the hermitage of Keshava Bharati when he was initiated, I would have tried to dissuade him ; but now it is too late. As a disinterested well-wisher I cannot ask him now to live with us. Tell him not to mourn for me or to feel any compunction for having left me. You all know I gave him free leave to go. My dutiful son would never have left me without my free permission." And then she looked reproachfully at the bhaktas, and said : " You blame me for not wishing him to come home. But did he not trust me ? Why did he put this absolute trust in me ? It is because he knew that his mother would never, for her own happiness, jeopardise his spiritual progress. I know my son well, as he knows me. He has trusted me because he knows he can trust me. I for my part will not betray the trust. Tell my son that since he has entered the order, he must keep his vow at all hazard ! "

The old lady looked so grand and beautiful, when she delivered her message, that the bhaktas raised a chorus of admiration. Their feelings had blinded them : the words of Shachee removed the film from their eyes at once. They realized that Shachee had taken a right and sensible view of the question. They began to discuss the situation amongst themselves. They said : "Yes, we now see why the Lord selected the old lady for the decision of this delicate matter. Considering all the circumstances, no mother in the world could, for the sake of a mother's love, sacrifice her own son, so worthy in every respect. But the Lord

knew his mother. He knew the stuff the lady was made of, or he would have never selected her for his mother. The mother must be worthy to have such a son."

But Shachee did not pay any attention to what the bhaktas said amongst themselves. She was communing with herself, and she broke silence, after a while, in these words : "What do you say if Nimai were to go to live in the Temple of Jagannath ? It is not as far off as Brindaban. It is a place where Sannyasees live and congregate. People go there from here on pilgrimage. So if my Nimai settles there, I shall be able to get news from him now and then, and, at the same time, his vow of renunciation will be thoroughly maintained ?"

Now, this Temple of Jagannath, which exists to this day, is about three weeks' journey on foot from Santipur. Shachee continued : "Yes, he could remain nearer home, but then I, you, and others would be tempted to annoy him by our presence. And, who knows, but if I found him nearer home, I might myself be tempted to annoy him by importuning him to return home ? Malicious people would raise the scandal that his renunciation was a myth. He should be always above suspicion ; for, he has a mission, a mission to save mankind, and I am not going, for my own happiness and convenience, to throw any obstacle in the way of that great work."

Here Shachee stopped, for tears choked her. "Go, tell my son my wishes," said she amidst sobs, and fell down flat on her back in the anguish of her sorrow. "So it is I that send my son away ! Oh, how unlucky !" cried she and rolled on the ground. The bhaktas reminded Shachee that such sorrow was unworthy of the mother of Sree Krishna, which she was. Seeta, the wife of Advaita, tried to console her as best as she could, and the bhaktas left her to convey her message to the Lord with a heavy heart, though full of the wildest admiration for the old lady.

The Lord heard the message and smiled with pleasure. He said, "her will is my law, and you should take a lesson from her." He said this, and looking Advaita in the face, rose. "May Krishna bless you," he said, "I am now going to Jagannath." Said Advaita: "Going! What do you say?" They all groaned in the bitterness of sorrow. The word flew from mouth to mouth that the Lord was going. Indeed, the Lord would have fled then and there but for the ardent importunities of the bhaktas, at whose instance he consented to wait to take leave of Shachee. Every one ran towards him. He was in a standing posture with his staff in one hand and his cup in the other. Seeing Shachee was coming towards him, he advanced to meet her and fell at her feet. Then son and mother sat down. The bhaktas raised an objection. They said that the Hindu king of Orissa and the Mussulman king of Bengal were fighting, and no one was allowed to go from here to that country.*

The Lord in reply said that Krishna would safeguard him on his way thither, and that he must go to see Neelachal-Chandra † (Chandra means moon); that it was of no moment whether he started then or a few hours later, since go he must. Shachee did not reply; for, she had given her permission. Advaita, how-

* The then only independent Hindu Prince, on this side of India, was Pratap-rudra, the King of Orissa, where the Temple of Jagannath is situated. The Temple of Jagannath is on the shores of the Bay of Bengal in the city called Puri or Neelachal.

† In the Puri Temple there is an Image called Jagannath or the "Lord of the Universe" meaning God. It is stated that the Temple and Image are Budhistic in origin and that the Hindus appropriated them. The Image is "hideous" to look at, but to the bhakta, who has got the "inner-sight," the Image is said to be the most lovely thing imaginable. When the Hindus appropriated the Temple, the Image was consecrated to a Hindu God. People worshipped the Image simply as Jagannath or the Lord of the Universe. It was Lord Gauranga who gave the Image a distinctive character as that of the Lord Sree Krishna.

ever, intervened, and he, with folded hands, implored the Lord to stay a few days more.

"Very well," replied the Lord, and there was again joy in Santipur.

Thus the Lord remained five days more in Santipur. The bhaktas arranged who should accompany the Lord. He was not willing to take any of them; but willing or not, he could not be allowed to go alone. Some bhaktas must follow him with or without permission. From among thousands five were selected, for every one was a candidate for the honour, *viz.*, Nityananda, Mukunda, Jagadananda, Govinda and Damodar. Gadadhar was not permitted to go on account of his extreme youth, as also Narahari for the same reason. Those who were householders had also no permission to accompany him; and thus Murari, Sreebash and others were refused the privilege of following him. Haridas could have gone, but he was originally a Mussulman, and, as such, he could not be permitted to go to Orissa. Any Mussulman found in Orissa, would be punished as a spy. Haridas fell at the feet of the Lord and wept. He said: "My Lord, you ignore none except this poor worm. For, I have no permission to go to that country." The Lord promised that he would take him there, which he did afterwards.

The five days elapsed and the Lord rose to depart. The Lord fell at the feet of Shachee and said: "At a moment of frenzy I renounced society. Mother, forgive the follies of a wayward child. I am yours, for ever and ever. I shall come to you again, and you shall get news of me often. I solemnly declare that I take charge of your body and soul. I know, you and others will pine for me, but such feelings ought to be trampled under foot. Let us serve Krishna and we shall get whatever we desire. Besides, as I told you then, and repeat it now, whether it be yourself, or Vishnupriya, or any other that loves me and

wants to see me ardently, I shall be visible in his or her heart." *

Saying this, he rose with a Haribole and rapidly proceeded towards the south. The old lady gazed at the receding figure of her son, and sat silent as a statue. The litter was ready for her to go home, the bhaktas were also ready to accompany her. When the Lord disappeared from sight, the lady fainted on the ground. But why describe all these things ? The litter reached Nadia, accompanied by thousands of men weeping. But from the sound of the wailing Vishnupriya knew that her lord had left society and—herself !

* This promise of the Lord was not confined to his mother, his wife, or his companions, but was meant for all humanity. And thus, even now, the true bhakta, with his mind's eye opened, does see, as a matter of fact, the Lord in his heart.

CHAPTER XI.

NEELACHAL-CHANDRA.

The Krishna of Brindaban now disappeared clear out of the heart of the Lord. It was now " Neelachal-Chandra " Who ruled his heart. To him, however, there was no difference between Krishna and the latter. His mind was under the complete control of his will. He could make his mind do one thing at a time and forget everything else. When he, therefore, handled any subject, he gave it a tangible shape. With him nothing was ethereal, nor even prem. When he attended to a man his whole soul was absorbed by him and the latter felt that there was no being on earth who loved him so dearly as the Lord did. After leaving Shachee and Santipur the Lord directed his mind to the Lord Jagannath, and the latter occupied his whole soul, so that he forgot mother, wife, friends, nay, his surroundings. He ran with the exclamation of " Jagannath, I come."

At Santipur he had passed a quiet life, undisturbed by his transcedental feelings. Besides, there, in the midst of his bhaktas and in the society of his mother, he was not allowed to follow all the rigorous rules of a Sannyasee. Thus he had to eat his dinner in a regular manner and sleep on a bed. But as soon as he left Santipur, he at once adopted all the rigid rules which were hitherto thought to be impossible for a man to follow. He continued to live upon a handful of rice and sleep on the bare ground !

The fact was, he did not care for external comforts, and his mind gave him no opportunity to think of them. How can the necessities of the body affect a being who is running with the exclamation of—"Jagannath! Thou hast called me. I am coming." His path lay by the bank of the Ganges, and he ran along it in a state which can be likened somewhat to that which overtook him when he first joined the order and renounced society. As a man follows a truant paper-kite, the Lord ran with up-lifted head and staring eyes towards the south, in pursuit of the Lord of his heart!

He passed Calcutta which was then a jungle, and at last reached Chhatrabhoge, where the Ganges, with innumerable mouths, enters the ocean. Human habitations do not exist further than that, and there the country of Bengal ends. The bhaktas saw that the Lord must wait there till he should find an opportunity of proceeding.

They, however, found that the being before them was not actually a helpless man, that they had in their human forgetfulness taken him for. For, just then, the Governor of the place, Ramchandra Khan, arrived at the town. He ruled that part of Bengal under the Mussulman sovereign of Gaur. His descendants are now distinguished members of Bengal society, the family being represented by Babus Rakhal Chandra Ray, Pyari Lal Ray and Bihari Lal Ray. He had to defend that part of Bengal from the aggressive people of Orissa, then ruled by the Hindu sovereign, Pratap-rudra. Well, Ramchandra arrived in that frontier town and heard that a wonderful mendicant had just then arrived there, who seemed to be a god in disguise.

Ramchandra was so impressed by this news that he was led to proceed thither at once. He saw that five ascetics, three of them being quite young, were keeping guard over another, the youngest of all, who was weeping with his head hidden beneath his knees. And whilst weeping, he was unburthening his heart

in this fashion : " My Lord Krishna," said he, " my Beloved ! Wilt Thou not permit me to see Thee ? Dost Thou not know that my heart is thirsting for Thy sight ? Oh my Krishna, Oh my Jagannath, give me wings that I may fly to Thee," etc. etc.

Ramchandra came and saw, and having saluted the Lord, stood transfixed with astonishment. He had never before seen a spectacle like that. The sight of the bhaktas indicated to him that their leader was something more than a man. Besides, the heart-rending tones, in which the Lord was weeping, utterly forgetful of the vast crowd which had collected round him, melted his heart. He became so restless that, unasked, he wanted to afford help. He addressed the Lord and said, with folded hands, "Swamee ! Why do you weep ? Can I be of any use to you ?" But the Lord did not give any reply, because he was then within himself and did not hear external sounds. Ramchandra then addressed Nitai, and Nitai told him in reply, that the young man was their leader, and he was weeping for Jagannath.

" But can I be of any use, can I help him ?" asked Ramchandra.

Nitai.—Certainly, you can ferry him across to the opposite country, Orissa.

Ramchandra pondered. He had no permission to allow any one either to go from Bengal to Orissa, or to enter Bengal from that country. But he would risk everything to send the holy men before him. So he said, again addressing Nitai : "Will you please let the young Gossain know that, come what may, this very night I shall send him over the border into Orissa ? Will he now stop weeping ?" Nitai was overjoyed ; he remembered that this was all the doing of the Lord, and not a mere coincidence.

Well, the boat arrived, and the Lord found himself with his followers in the Province of Orissa.

Govinda, who accompanied the Lord, wrote a note of the principal events he witnessed while he was with the Lord. The following amusing, though wonderful, conversion of a poor washerman, is related in Govinda's book. They were proceeding, when they suddenly came across a washerman beating clothes upon a piece of plank as was his habit. He was deeply engaged in his work and had no eye for the holy men that were passing by him. But wonder of wonders, the Lord who was almost unconscious of the external world, stopped, approached him, nay, at length, accosted him. Said the Lord, "Washerman! say Haribole."

The poor man thought that the mendicants had come to beg alms of him; so, without even looking at the intruders, he replied that he was so poor that he had absolutely nothing to give them. "We want nothing else from you, except that you say Haribole," repeated the Lord. The washerman refused. He could not understand the motive of the request. He feared that if he listened to the request, perhaps he would be required to pay something. Suddenly an idea struck him how to get rid of these troublesome intruders. He said: "I am a poor man and have to work to provide for my family; I can't now afford to give up beating this piece of cloth, in order to utter the name you suggest to me."

"Is that all?" asked the Lord, smiling. "Let me have that piece of cloth. I shall do the beating for you, while you say Haribole."

The washerman, in despair, agreed to say Haribole, though he declined to hand over the piece of cloth to the Lord. "You are very persistent, I see," said he, in tones of almost unnoticeable resentment. "Well, tell me what I am to do."

The Lord.—Say Haribole.

The washerman.—Haribole.

The Lord.—Repeat that again.

The washerman.—Haribole.

The Lord.—Once again, please.

The washerman.—Haribole, Haribole, Haribole; and he then began to repeat the name, unasked. Indeed, the name "stuck to his tongue," and he could not help uttering it. While he was uttering the name, in spite of himself, he was losing consciousness. In the end he succeeded in entering into a complete state of ecstacy, and then, raising both his hands high, began to dance, while uttering the holy name!

If the spectacle was awe-inspiring, it was also laughter-producing; and the bhaktas, including the Lord, enjoyed the scene before them immensely. Indeed, they sat at a distance to see how all this would end. The wife of this bhakti-stricken washerman came soon after to the spot with a plate of rice in hand. To avoid losing time, according to arrangement, the wife always brought his dinner to him in this manner, when he was washing. On her arrival, she saw her husband dancing with up-lifted arms and uttering the name of God Hari. She was a little amused at the sight, and accosted her husband. "I did not know," said she, "that you were a dancing man." But the husband made no reply. On approaching nearer she found that there was no lustre in her husband's eyes, and that he had no knowledge of the external world.

She sought to rouse him by calling him loudly, but to no purpose. She took alarm, and ran to her village for help. "Help, help," she cried as she proceeded towards her neighbours. "My husband has been taken possession of by a ghost!" The villagers were very much astonished to hear this, and ran to see what the matter was. Accompanying the wife of the washerman, they came to see that the latter was still dancing in the same manner as we have described. The sight at first gave them amusement; but, seeing that the matter was a little serious, they sought to awake him to consciousness—from a distance. For, though it was broad day, they were afraid to come too close to one who,

they believed, was under the control of a ghost. A bold spirit, however, clasped him by the arm to force him to stop, and the result was what he and the others could not have expected! He too was immediately imbued with the holy spirit! The touch affected him in a similar manner. The name of Hari danced on the tongue of the new-comer, while he, in turn, danced with the washerman. But he did not lose his senses completely; he beckoned the others to come nearer. They came, and he embraced them. And then they too caught the contagion!

In this manner the entire village was brought under the control of the holy influence. The Lord and the bhaktas, after enjoying the scene for some time, left the place.

The above incident is described in the "Notes of Govinda" who followed the Lord on the occasion. Of course, it is likely to be deemed incredible; but the power, as described in the above incident, possessed by the Lord, is testified to in innumerable ways and instances by a large number of writers. The Lord could throw a man into a trance by a touch or look; that sometimes people were affected even by a look at him, or a touch of his person, or even his garments, is testified to by innumerable eye-witnesses. Nay, what is more strange is that the man, thus affected, imbibed the influence for life. A single case is not known of a man who, having fallen under the influence of Lord Gauranga, was able to effect his escape *

In those days the Hindus had almost more temples than dwelling-houses; every village was crowded with sacred shrines, and everywhere there was provision for the maintenance of holy

* The Lord in a fit of ecstacy had fallen into the sea, and was lost to the bhaktas. His body was caught in the net of a fisherman, who dragged him up. The fisherman was at once possessed by the holy spirit, inasmuch as he began to dance and utter the name of Hari. This incident led the bhaktas to the recovery of the Lord, whom they soon brought round to consciousness.

men, pilgrims, and way-farers. Even now hospitality is universal; inn-keepers have very little business here. When the Mussulmans came, they, in their zeal, destroyed everything they could lay their hands on. But into Orissa they had not been able to penetrate, and everything remained intact there. The Lord and his followers thus had no difficulty whatever in procuring a place of rest or a handful of rice. The Lord spoke very little; he was always in a state of ecstacy, and, if he regained his semi-consciousness, the only conversation that he had with Nitai was as to whether Jagannath would allow him to obtain a sight of His face!

One day Nitai told him the story of Madhavendra Puri, the Guru of Iswar Puri, who, in his turn, was the Guru of the Lord himself. The reader may remember that from Iswar Puri, at Gaya, the Lord first received his initiation. Nitai told the Lord how Madhavendra Puri died under a tree, while being tended by his disciple Iswar. Madhavendra was so pleased with the service of his disciple Iswar that he made over to him all the "Krishna-prem" that he had himself acquired by a life-long and ardent devotion to Krishna. I have already said that to these holy men, love and bhakti were not ethereal somethings, but stern realities like any other tangible substance. Nitai then related how Madhavendra Puri, as he left his body, uttered a prayer to Krishna, composed at that interesting moment. He was lying prostrate beneath a tree; his disciple Iswar was by his side, tending him. Madhavendra's last moment arrived. He folded his hands in token of the deepest veneration and uttered the following prayer, in the form of a sloka (couplet):

"Oh my Lord Krishna, O Thou, whose heart melteth at the sight of the misery of the low; I have been seeking Thee; when wilt Thou appear before me?"

Nitai said that Madhavendra Puri's soul quitted his body while he uttered this sloka.

But Nitai could not finish his sentence; for, the Lord fell

down in a swoon on hearing the sloka, which had been uttered from the bottom of his soul by a dying man. He rose after a while to dance, while uttering the first two words of the sloka. We mention this incident here to offer a remark which is that the religion, which Lord Gauranga taught, is so simple that its principles are contained only in the two couplets composed by Madhavendra Puri, while leaving his body.

At last the bhaktas pointed out to the Lord the top of the very high Temple of Jagannath. That Temple was his destination; there he had been directed by his mother to remain for the rest of his life; there he was to find Jagannath, his Sree Krishna, the thought of Whom solely occupied his mind. The sight maddened him!

He wanted to run there; but by running he could make only slow progress,—he really wanted to fly. He ran with all his might towards the Temple and fell down in a swoon. He rose to run again, only to fall down as before. These fits were not pleasing to him, for, they were retarding his progress; but there was no help,—he was overpowered by his excess of joy. Not being able to make any progress, he stood gazing at the top. He beckoned the bhaktas to come nearer, and pointed out to them, with his finger, the top of the Temple and told them, in a sloka, half of which he uttered but failed to utter the other half; for, he was overpowered by his feelings. The meaning of this sloka was this: "Behold, on the summit of the Temple, Sree Krishna, with a smiling face, beckoning me towards Him."

The bhaktas gazed in the direction indicated by the Lord; but they saw nothing. The Lord, however, could not wait any longer; for, was not Sree Krishna calling him? He ran towards the Temple with the exclamation of—"I come! I come!" A little before, the Lord had told his companions that he had no desire to see Jagannath in company, and that either they should go first or allow him to do so. They, of course, agreed that he should

go first. So when the Lord ran, they lagged behind; not that had they tried, they could have kept up with him.

Yet they were seized with one apprehension. The " hideous material figure " of the Lord Jagannath was seated on a Throne in an inner apartment of the Temple. He was the absolute King of Puri, and was treated as such. He was bathed, fed, and at night laid in bed. He was fanned in the hot season, and covered with a quilt in the cold. He had, of course, innumerable servants; the king Pratap-rudra himself being one of them, whose function was to sweep the street before the Temple with a broom, made of gold!

The Person of the Lord Jagannath, as in the case of ordinary sovereigns, was protected by innumerable guards. He was inaccessible and unapproachable as the Czar of Russia. To be able to secure an audience, pilgrims had to apply to those who attended upon Him.

The effect of the above arrangements was, at least in some respects, excellent. The Lord God, by means of an Image, is, as it were, brought face to face with His creatures. Of course, everyone has the privilege of seeking Him in his heart, and those, who can do so successfully, have no need of going to a Temple in order to see this Image. But as few men are so happily constituted, a Temple with His Image serves a very good purpose. Now, this we know from experience. Many years ago, influenced by the literature and religion of the West, we personally acquired a distaste for material Temples and Images, and thought that we had no need for " idols," and we were doing very well with the Temple of our heart and the Image that we could set up there. But, step by step, we came to see that the material accessories have their advantages, nay, they are essential for most men. Men, who fancy that they can do very well without these Images, derive, as a matter of fact, very little advantage from their so-called communion with Him, though they know it not.

In the worship of God, as in many other things, the first thing necessary is realization. The more a man can realize the presence of God in his heart, the more successful is he in his worship. Possibly there are men who can effect this realization without the help of material accessories. But, as in our own case, most men will find them of immense service.

Where is God? The answer is, everywhere, which comes to the same thing as nowhere. The votary seeks Him in his heart, but does not find Him there, and after an unsuccessful attempt, gives up the search. He thinks moreover that such is the fate of everyone. The more persistent man does not give Him up so easily. He goes a step further, makes an effort to realize His presence, and mutters some prayers which had been composed for him by other holy men. He utters them like a parrot, and he thinks that his duty has heen very well done. He is satisfied with this, because he knows no better.

A bhakta hears a sermon, is moved by it, and he considers that he is worshipping God. But real worship of God, *viz.*, communion with Him, is a quite different thing. That communion, when it is successful, is followed by bliss, (a bliss which has no parallel in the world) with the visible symptoms thereof, such as tears of joy, and at last a swoon. The man whose so-called communion with God does not bring him bliss *may rest assured that he has gained very little by his efforts*, and that the communion, for which he has striven, has not been brought about. An idolater seeks his God in his heart and does not find Him there. He runs to a Temple to see God. He sees the Image before him, and he pours out the treasure of his innermost thoughts to the Image. Subsequently, he finds that he can recall in his heart the same Image that he had seen in the Temple. This is the second stage. And the third stage is, when this Image, in his heart, becomes a living Being.

Jagannath, or "the Lord of the Universe," is holding court

within. The pilgrim comes to see Him after days and months of toil. On arrival he finds his passage blocked by guards. The pilgrim is made to feel that the Lord God is not easily to be seen. This only increases what is called the "thirst" of the pilgrim for Him, and his estimate of the magnificence of the Lord of the universe. Would the people of Russia feel so much awe for the Czar, if he was always visible? So, if the doors of Jagannath were open to all, His awe-inspiring presence would lose much of its influence. Hence guards keep watch over Him, and pilgrims, after much toil and sacrifice, at last find an opportunity of having a look at the Divine face.

And what is the result? The "hideous figure" is converted into a bewitching, lovely Thing! The pilgrim feels that he has at last seen God, and that he has been graciously received by Him. He feels that the Presence has drawn him away from the world and lifted him up to a higher sphere; that it has destroyed the cart-load of his sin; and that it has made sin hateful to him. Sincere penitents proceed to the shrines, and come back, changed men, with a celestial beauty about them and a sweetness of temper which proves that they had not gone in vain.

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CHAPTER XII.

THE OFFENDED GUARDS.

WHEN the Lord hastened forward to see Jagannath, his bhaktas began to feel a good deal of anxiety on his account. How will the Lord manage with the guards? They were quite sure that the Lord would never wait for their permission and that he would run, in his present state of ecstacy, to the Image within. And that being the case, how would the guards, who could never forgive such an offence, deal with him? So they followed the Lord with anxiety in their minds.

The Lord flew like lightning, passed through different guard-rooms, and approached Jagannath. His idea was to hold the Figure in his bosom. The Figure was set on a Throne, which was again set on a high platform. The Lord jumped up to get hold of the Figure, but in the attempt fell flat on the floor in a deep swoon!

The guards saw that a man had, disregarding their presence, passed by them. And they were awfully offended. Suppose a man gives a slip to the guards and runs to the Czar,—what do the guards think? They think that they have been eternally disgraced. Thus felt the soldiers, who kept guard over the Lord Jagannath. Hundreds of them ran in pursuit of the offending pilgrim. They would not have killed the intruder, but they would have given him blows and dragged him forth, which would practically have been almost death to an offender. Of

course, Sree Gauranga was a Sannyasee, and one of his order cannot be meddled with by a layman. But, in Puri, they were accustomed to see thousands of such ascetics. Besides, if Sannyasees were the object of veneration of every class of men, the servants of Jagannath fancied, that they, being direct servants of God Almighty, were superior to all, even to Sannyasees.

And thus many of them were ready to assault the golden figure which lay before them in a death-like swoon.

But here an incident, which seems more like a page from a romance than from a real history, happened. While the guards crowded round the Lord for the purpose of assaulting him, a stranger stepped forward to protect him. A tall and elderly Brahmin of majestic appearance was there, when the Lord first appeared on the scene. He had seen something in the new comer which irresistibly led him to his protection. He saw the guards had, in their fury, lost all control over themselves, and he feared that they would, in their that state of mind, listen to no remonstrance. So, to protect him from the assault of the infuriated mob, he covered the body of the Lord with his person, exclaiming, "Forbear, you fools! Do you not see that he is a holy man, if not the great God Himself?"

The guards in their anger would have disregarded the injunctions of the intruder, but then he was not a person to be slighted; he was the second man in the Empire, being only next in importance to king Pratap-rudra.

For, he was the great Basudeva Sarvabhauma himself, the great savant of Nadia!

He was the founder of the Nyaya Philosophy in Nadia, the subtleties of which made "the European head dizzy." Though his fame was eclipsed by his great pupil Raghunath Siromani, yet it is very doubtful whether the latter was really a greater philosopher than the former. He performed the apparently impossible feat of committing the whole text of the Nyaya Philosophy to heart, an account of which will be found in Vol. I, page XII.

If Mithila was the seat of Nyaya, Benares was the seat of the Vedic learning. People had to go there to study the Vedas. Basudeva, having mastered Nyaya, had gone there for that purpose and mastered the Vedas also. And he was so successful that he was considered one of the two foremost Vedic scholars of the period, he himself and Prakasananda Saraswatee, the Sannyasee of Benares. The fame of Vasudeva having spread far and wide, Pratap-rudra, king of Orissa, the only remaining Hindu king on that side of India, had induced him to settle in the holy city of Puri, and open a tole there. The tole was established and thousands and tens of thousands of students, both of the Vedas and Nyaya, (nay, also of other branches of study, for, the great Pundit was versed in almost all), flocked to it. Such was his repute that thousands of ascetics,—learned Sannyasees,—took lessons at his feet. It was he who gave the law to those who managed the Temple, and the king respected him as he respected his own spiritual Guru.

Basudeva Sarvabhauma was, however, not a spiritual man. He had only cultivated his intellect, and derived therefrom all his importance and pleasure. His chief happiness consisted in what he derived from the cultivation of his keen intellect and the satisfaction of his vanity. He lived to earn respect and demolish rivals. He was a man of large heart, and was kind and courteous to all, but yet he could not brook a rival. To secure his patronage, the first thing necessary for a man was to humble himself before the savant.

He did not care to dissipate his energies by any thought of the future life. But a logical fallacy would occupy his days and nights of earnest thought. Having no firm faith, in fact, no faith in religion, he yet had to go through all the forms with the greatest care and nicety. This, not that he had any belief in them, but firstly because he had to obey popular prejudices, and secondly because habit

had made him a slave to them. While he was at Nadia, Nimai had, as a young student, read Nyaya for some time in his tole; but that was long ago, and school-masters rarely recognize, in after years, the pupils whom they had taught in their younger days. Sarvabhauma had, therefore, no knowledge as to who it was that he had been led to protect from the anger of the soldiers guarding the Temple of Jagannath.

He did not know what to do with the fainting figure before him. Surely he could not leave him there to the anger of the guards. The idea had crossed his mind that the being, whose body he was guarding, was not an ordinary person, and that he deserved all his care. His pupils flocked everywhere; so many of them were there, and he directed some of them to convey the fainting figure to his own house.

His pupils, therefore, carried the body of the Lord on their shoulders. No sooner had they touched his sacred person than they were led to utter the name of Hari. And thus, in the midst of loud peals of Haribole, our dear master entered the house of Sarvabhauma!

Sarvabhauma laid him on a sacred spot, and dismissed his pupils. Seeing that the body before him exhibited no signs of life, he held cotton before his nostrils. By this means he perceived that he was breathing, though almost imperceptibly, and the savant was relieved. He found in the body of the Lord many things to amaze him. The perfectly-formed body, the chiselled face, the golden hue, the divine eyes, then half shut, first attracted his attention. Gazing at the face he could see that the owner was not only innocent of all guile, but had never committed an unworthy act in his life. But he felt more. The idea possessed his mind that the young man had a large heart, and that its capacity for love had no bounds. The fragrance of the body next attracted him by its sweetness.

But what impressed him most was the condition in which he found the Lord. He had read in the sacred books that there was such a thing as love of God, or Krishna-prem, and that this love of God was manifested by certain symptoms which he also knew. Now, for the first time, he learnt that what the shastras said was all true. Indeed, when the Lord was entering the Temple, his body being enveloped in a holy light, which was always visible on his person in his ecstatic state, Sarvabhauma had taken him for a celestial being in disguise, perhaps Jagannath Himself. And although a closer inspection removed that idea, he still felt that the being before him was much higher than himself; that he was, as the shastras say, "a man who had Radha's love for Krishna in him."

So Krishna-prem is a fact, thought Sarvabhauma. And it is possible for a man to feel such an ardent love for God as to fall down in an ecstatic swoon at sight of His Image! He had heard of such holy men, but never seen one in his life. And what does this prove? "It proves," argued that Naiyayic Pundit, "that there is a God, that He is good, and that He wants love. For, Nature cannot commit a mistake. If there had been no good God who wanted the love of His creatures, Nature would have never given so much love to the lucky being before me. And even if God is no better than a man, He must be an ardent friend to those who love Him so well. And since he has acquired this love, it must be possible for others also to acquire it. Lucky indeed is this young man; and a fool am I, to fritter away my time in worthless pursuits. Therefore I will utilize the present fortunate occasion, to acquire, if I may, some small portion of the faith which this happy Sannyasee carries in his heart."

Sarvabhauma's sister was married to Pundit Gopeenath, and the latter had come to visit his wife who was staying with her brother. This distinguished Pundit had the inestimable good

fortune of being an ardent believer in the Lord. He, however, did not know that the Lord had come to Puri, much less that he had been carried in a state of swoon from the Temple to the house of his brother-in-law, though he was at that time in the neighbourhood of the Temple.

Nitai and other followers of the Lord followed their master to the Temple, when they learned that a young Sannyasee of Herculean frame, having fainted at the sight of Jagannath, had been carried to the house of Sarvabhauma. Nitai desired to go there, but despaired of being able to gain access to the residence of that great man. Of course, Nitai and others were all dressed in the garb worn by holy men, but thousands of their sort daily learnt at the feet of the great savant Sarvabhauma. Whilst they were considering by what means they might approach the Lord, they came across Gopeenath !

Gopeenath at once recognized Nitai and the others, and heard what they had to say, *viz.*, that the Lord, now a Sannyasee, had arrived at Puri that very day on a visit to Jagannath, and having fainted in the Temple, had a short while ago been carried to Sarvabhauma's house, he conducted them to the house of his host and brother-in-law, Sarvabhauma. The presence of Sarvabhauma at the time the Lord entered the Temple, and the presence of Gopeenath, when Nitai and his companions required some one to introduce them to the house of the savant, are considered wonderful coincidences.

They saw the Lord lying in an unconscious state, and Sarvabhauma sitting by him. The bhaktas surrounded the Lord and sought to rouse him by a kirtan. They uttered loudly the name of Hari in his ears, one after the other. This had the desired effect, and the Lord arose after a *hunkar* had been sounded, followed by the ejaculation, "Hari," "Hari."

Sarvabhauma then fell prostrate at the feet of the Lord. This he was compelled to do, because he was a householder and

the Lord an ascetic. The Lord blessed him with the words: "May thy soul abide in Krishna!"

Said Sarvabhauma: "It is getting late, Swamee. Will you please go to the sea-side for your bath, and having bathed, come back to honour your slave by breaking your fast here?"

The Lord agreed. He and his followers then all went off to bathe in the sea, and on the way the Lord heard everything about himself,—how, in going to embrace the Image of Jagannath, he had fallen down in a swoon, and how Sarvabhauma, having protected him by his person from the fury of the guards, had him carried on the shoulders of his disciples to his own house.

Though Gopeenath tried to conceal the fact, yet Sarvabhauma could see that he not only knew the youth intimately, but also bore a tender feeling for him. "Who is this young Swamee, brother?" asked Sarvabhauma of Gopeenath. The latter had then to tell all.

The Lord and others returned after having a bath in the sea. Sarvabhauma again prostrated himself before the Lord, and the Lord again blessed him in the terms noted above. Said Sarvabhauma: "Swamee, I have learnt all about you. Your grandfather Nilambar and my father Maheshwar Bisharad were fellow-students. Your father Jagannath was a fellow-student of mine. So you see, you are dear to me in every respect. And then you are an ascetic and, as such, you are an object for my worship, and I am your slave."

The Lord, thereupon, in a state of perfect consciousness, replied: "My obligations to you are endless. But for your kind protection I don't know what would have become of me to-day. In a fit of frenzy I left society, but I hope I have not thereby lost my claims upon you. Kindly deal with me as you would with a backward child of yours. I place myself absolutely at your disposal."

Now, minute by minute, the famous savant was recovering from the great awe which had come over him, when he first

looked upon the Lord. He then thought that the being before him was Jagannath Himself, or, at the least, some celestial being. When the Lord was lying in his house in an unconscious state, he beheld in him a perfect specimen of humanity, and, at the same instant, began to feel that there was such a thing as Krishna-prem, and that one drop of the prem, which the young man before him seemed to possess, was superior to all the cart-loads of learning which he himself had acquired. Then he felt himself truly humbled, in the sorrowful assurance that he had only dissipated his energies.

But now, having learnt that the being who had so dazzled him, was neither Jagannath nor even a celestial spirit of a lesser order, but only a man like himself, nay, the son of an indifferent Pundit of Nadia, his awe for the Lord evaporated quickly. When, therefore, he had to salute the Lord a second time, he felt it a humiliation to be compelled to bow his head to a young man, who was, as he thought, in spite of his being in holy orders, so inferior to him in every way. But the attitude of the Lord disarmed the ill-feeling that was rising in his mind. His humble attitude, his trust in him, and his sweet and submissive voice, led the great Pundit to feel a great attraction for the Lord.

When the Lord and his followers had broken their fast, Sarvabhauma arranged a hut for them to reside in. It belonged to his mother's sister. And thither the Lord, Nitai and the others proceeded.

The Pundit, as host, waited upon the Lord and his followers while they ate, and when this pious duty of hospitality to holy men had been performed, he and his friend Gopeenath sat down to their meal together. When they had finished, they proceeded to the savant's tole where the students were assembled.

Said Sarvabhauma to Gopeenath: "I don't like this arrangement. Whoever enters the order of Sannyasees, is entitled to be saluted by others, however high. The result is that they are led

to indulge their pride, which it is one of the first duties of an ascetic to subdue. However, this young man, Sree Krishna-Chaitanya, is an amiable and lovable creature. I don't know why it is that he so irresistibly enthralls me by his sweetness. I am glad he has not as yet learnt to be haughty. He is too young for an ascetic. I very much fear lest his youth tempts him to fall a victim to his passions. But, since he has come to me, it will be my duty to see that he is not permitted to fall. I will teach him the Vedas; for, as an ascetic, to learn the scriptures is his first duty. I regret he took his initiation from a Bharati. He must change all that. He must be made to go through the ceremony again, and receive his credentials, on this occasion, from a Sannyasee of a superior class." * He was speaking in this rambling fashion to his brother-in-law, Gopeenath, unaware of the fact that every sentence he uttered was giving deep pain to his listener.

Gopeenath here suggested in a seemingly careless tone, that Swamee Krishna-Chaitanya probably did not care much at whose hands he received his initiation. He never cared for forms. His object was simply to renounce society, and he was, therefore, probably utterly indifferent what the class was, inferior or superior, which could claim his membership. Sarvabhauma replied with some warmth: "What do you say, Pundit? Is it a mere matter of form to choose the better?"

To which, Gopeenath.—It is pure vanity that leads one to give importance to such trifling matters.

Sarvabhauma.—Vanity! what do you call vanity?

Gopeenath.—What need one care what people think of him, if he is sure of his own ground?

Sarvabhauma.—And is not the opinion of one's fellows of any value? Is it not for the good opinion of our fellows that we do

* These Sannyasees are divided into nine classes, the lowest being the Bharati, and the higher the Puri, the Saraswati, etc.

most things? Why am I a student? Is it not mainly for the good opinion of my fellow-beings? I must say, Krishna-Chaitanya has done a foolish act in taking his vows from a Bharati.

Gopeenath could tolerate the savant's arrogance no longer. He had promised to keep his relationship with the Lord a secret; but, goaded by the remark of the savant, he was led to reveal all. Boiling over with indignation, which he vainly endeavoured to conceal, he replied, as if half in jest and half in earnest: "Pundit," said he, "a great savant as you are, I would respectfully recommend you to spare the young ascetic your patronage. He does not need your help. This you will learn soon; for, he is no other than an Incarnation of the Almighty Himself."

Sarvabhauma saw, as did his pupils, with great surprise, nay, consternation, that Gopeenath was serious. Now these pupils were not young boys; indeed, some of them were full-grown men. Trained under an intellectual and aggressive man, they had all learnt to be aggressive, and were fond of discussion. When it was perceived that Pundit Gopeenath had seriously asserted the young ascetic to be an Incarnation of the Lord God Himself, they all gazed at him with a scornful and defiant expression. One of the foremost cried out,—"Proof? Where is your proof? What is your first premise and what is your second? Here is an extraordinary proposition, indeed!" And hundreds of them volunteered, metaphorically, to annihilate Gopeenath then and there.

Gopeenath saw that he had committed a technical blunder. He ought then to have apologised and said nothing further. But he could not; the patronising tone of Sarvabhauma and the contemptuous manner in which the savant had spoken of the Lord, had destroyed his equanimity. So he replied, in spite of himself, to the demands of "proof," though not to the students whose action in thus addressing him he thought impertinent, but to Sarvabhauma. He said: "Pundit! I simply bade you beware of how you treated that so-called young ascetic. He is neither young nor

a man; for, he is as old as the universe and as old as the Father of all created things. I know it, but you as yet know it not, though you will learn it in a short time. If you want proofs, I can tell you this much that I know him to have credentials which it would be utterly impossible for a human being to possess." *

Sarvabhauma found himself in a delicate position. He had only a faint faith in God, in a Personal God scarcely any, in the possibility of an Incarnation none whatsoever; while, as to the scholarship and intelligence of Gopeenath, his opinion of them was not so high as the opinion he had of his own. When Gopeenath seriously claimed divinity for Lord Gauranga, Sarvabhauma felt an impulse to laugh outright, but he checked himself. Such conduct, he felt, would not become a savant; besides, Gopeenath was both his brother-in-law and his guest. But more especially, because he was by training the politest man in the universe. Indeed, when his students assailed Gopeenath, he sternly rebuked them, and took up the gauntlet of discussion with his own hands.

Seeing that Gopeenath felt offended, he tried to soothe him by gentle words. "You see, brother," said he, "we followers

* It will benefit humanity incalculably if the divinity of Gauranga is proved. It may hurt the vanity of those who profess to worship other Avatars, to acknowledge Gauranga as one; but men possessed with such bigotry, are not to be imitated but avoided. It is the duty of every man, who is sceptical, to satisfy himself as to the nature and justice of the claim to divinity of every "pretender" put forward by his followers. In the case of Sree Gauranga, we believe, that an honest examination of his claims will convince most minds of his divinity. Of course, it is impossible to deal with those who will neither believe nor investigate. There are men who consider Sree Gauranga as a disagreeable rival of the Avatar they worship. But these men have no love for God, humanity, or, for the matter of that, the Avatar they profess to worship. What they practically mean is that they would prefer to have no Avatars than a rival to the one they worship! They want others to follow their Avatar, and this means that self is their predominant idea. Those who have a drop of love for humanity, ought to rejoice if the divinity of Sree Gauranga is proved.

of Nyaya cannot accept anything on trust. We want proofs for everything; and you must forgive us for not accepting the young man as God Almighty Himself until we had got conclusive reasons to that effect. Of course, if you had been able to point out any shastric text, promising the advent of an Avatar in this *Kali-yug* (Iron Age), I could have commanded the necessary patience to examine the antecedents of the young man, your God. Unfortunately there is even no such authority to help you."

Gopeenath sought to argue the matter with the sage, but he saw that he had no chance of defeating Sarvabhauma in a discussion. He further saw that the savant was dealing gently with him, simply because he was a relation and his guest, and this his proud spirit could not brook. He ought to have stopped there and apologised, but he could not, for, he had partially lost his temper. He said: "In a discussion I have no chance against you. But let me remind you of the sloka which says that it is not possible to know God by the mere exercise of the reason, and that He is known only by him to whom He mercifully manifests Himself. When He showers His grace upon you, then you also will recognise Him. This I know which you, though a savant, fail to discern, namely, that he, the young ascetic, is the Incarnation of Sree Krishna!"

Sarvabhauma.—I see you have begun a regular fight with me. Of course, you perceive that there is a fallacy in your argument. I quite admit that the grace of God is not in me. You have, however, to prove that it is in you, Gopeenath.

Gopeenath was non-plussed. He, however, replied in tones which showed that the savant's caustic replies were rankling in his heart. "I was foolish," said he, "to open a discussion with the greatest master of logic in the world. But yet, know this, thou man of learning, brimful of the pride of intellect! the time is sure to come when, Pundit as you are, you will have to bow

your haughty head and follow the young Krishna-Chaitanya even as I do now, and accept him as the God of the universe in a human body."

Sarvabhauma smiled and the students tittered. Gopeenath felt that he was "casting pearls among weeds." He ceased, deeply mortified, the more so that before such an intellectually proud and critical audience he had betrayed the fact that he worshipped a young anchorite as the Lord God of the universe!

Sarvabhauma had also lost his temper, but he checked himself, though his words yet betrayed him. For, he said: "Excuse me, brother; we shall discuss this matter hereafter, if necessary. Will you please, in the meantime, do me the favour of inviting your Lord God and his followers to accept my hospitality tomorrow?"

Of course, every one understood the sarcasm of inviting "your Lord God" to a dinner. But Gopeenath kept quiet, though the words of the savant burnt like living fire in his heart.

On the other hand, the words of Gopeenath had a disastrous effect on the minds of Sarvabhauma as also of his pupils in regard to the Lord. The savant had come to feel a great affection for the Lord, which Gopeenath's false tactics threatened to eradicate from his heart. We shall explain briefly how the advent of the Lord had affected the mind of the savant.

As previously stated, at the first glance he took the Lord to be either Jagannath Himself or some inferior celestial being. A few moments after, he considered that the young ascetic must be the luckiest man in the world with his unparalleled Krishna-prem, and confessed to himself his folly in having frittered away his energies in worthless pursuits. His highest desire, at that moment, was to acquire, if possible, some prem at the feet of the young ascetic. When he subsequently learnt that the ascetic was neither Jagannath, nor an inhabitant of heaven, but a man, and, more, a young man of his own town and the son of a poor Pundit,

his respect for his host almost disappeared, though not his attraction for him. His beauty, his look of innocence, his renunciation, and, above all, his meekness and absolute reliance on him, irresistibly attracted the savant to the young ascetic. The attraction for him remained, though his previous idea of acquiring prem from him slowly vanished from his mind.

At this juncture Gopeenath intervened. His blunders served to irritate Sarvabhauma by appealing to his baser feelings. Indeed, Gopeenath's claim on behalf of the Lord,—he saw no reason why the savant should offer his patronage to the young ascetic—tended to instill into the mind of the latter a feeling of jealousy for his young guest. The more Gopeenath tried to exalt the Lord, the more determined the savant became to depreciate the latter. For, this is human nature, at least, the nature of those worldly men who have, all the days of their lives, indulged their vanity, their selfishness, and so forth.

What the savant felt most persons would have felt under the same circumstances. There was, however, no breach, either open or secret, between him and the Lord. For, though Gopeenath proclaimed him to be the Lord God, the Lord himself posed as the humblest servant of the savant. And Sarvabhauma thus opened his heart to his disciples secretly: "The young ascetic," said he, "is an admirable man and bids fair to be a great one. His followers are doing their best to spoil him by making a God of him. But the youth himself is more intelligent than that. They have not as yet succeeded in spoiling him, and now that he is here and under my protection, he is safe. I will no longer permit his foolish companions to flatter him. I will not only have him initiated over again, but will teach him the Vedas, the study of which is the chief business of those who enter the order of Sannyasees."

But where is your resolve gone, dear savant, of acquiring prem at the feet of the young ascetic? Where

have you left your newly-acquired knowledge that there is a loving God, that He desires to be loved, and the most valuable acquisition for men is love for God? His life-long training, which had made his vanity the moving force of all his actions, banished all these excellent ideas from his heart.

And this is the way our greatest men behave. They will always teach and never learn. They will always command, but never obey. A wife, with an uxorious husband, fancies that she is lucky; for, she has a husband who is obedient. On the other hand, a wife who is loving and unselfish, prefers a husband of strong mind, and faithfully and cheerfully obeys the behests of her lord. If the wife of the hen-pecked husband enjoys the satisfaction of being obeyed, the unselfish wife derives a still greater pleasure from her obedience. Little does the former know that the latter is the happier of the two. For, while there is some fictitious enjoyment to be derived from a position of command, the real enjoyment comes from a position of service. It is better for man to obey than to command, since the pleasure derived from the former is real and that derived from the latter unreal and debasing. Learn to obey and thereby your spirit will be chastened, and you will make yourself more acceptable to God. Indeed our master commands us to be "humbler than the grass" we tread upon.

Now the whole world is anxious to teach, and no one wishes to learn. If you want teachers, hundreds will come to your call; but, if you want to teach, your fellows will not approach you. For, vanity rules most minds. To teach is to arrogate to oneself superiority, and such an attitude pleases one's vanity. To learn is to be humble, and that hurts vanity; therefore, people prefer to teach than to learn.

But is not the student more fortunate than the professor? The professor gains nothing by teaching, while the student by learning not only retains what he had, but acquires more! Thus the

savant Sarvabhauma saw that though he had mastered Nyaya, the Vedas, and most other branches of knowledge, he had not yet obtained a single drop of prem. He, for the moment, realized vividly that his many acquirements, although they satisfied his vanity, would be of no use to him in the after-life. He, therefore, resolved to acquire prem from the young ascetic whom God had luckily placed at his disposal. But his vanity stood in the way. He forgot all his wise resolutions; he checked all his higher aspirations, and trembled with apprehension when he saw that the young ascetic threatened to dispute his superiority! So he struggled to maintain his position; luckily, however, the Lord was not disposed to dispute it.

He had a talk with the Lord after his conversation with Gopeenath. Said Sarvabhauma: "I see in you everything that is good, but I fear you are too young to be an ascetic. The shastras declare it to be improper to initiate a man who is below the age of fifty."

The Lord (humbly and with folded hands).—When I entered the order, I was in a state of frenzy. Besides, I am only an ignorant young man. But what I have done cannot be undone now.

The savant.—Again, why did not you select a man of better class than a Bharati for your Guru? The Saraswati, (a class of Sannyasees), is better. You must be initiated again.

The Lord.—You know I am at your absolute disposal. It was not Jagannath alone who attracted me here. It is a privilege to be taught by you and here I am at your feet.

The savant was mightily pleased. He said: "This humility on your part suits you very well. Besides, to tell you frankly, I feel a father's affection for you."

What the savant wanted was, not only to re-initiate the Lord, but also to reprove him before his pupils so as to show his superiority over the Lord before them, and thus to reduce him to the position of an inferior.

"Krishna-Chaitanya," said he, "the passions are dreadful things, and you are only a lad. How will you conquer them? To this end, I will read the Vedas to you everyday. Mind, as a Sannyasee, to listen to them, being read, is your most sacred duty." The Lord repeated humbly that he was absolutely at the disposal of the savant.

The savant again observed: "I have not myself seen it, but I have heard that though an ascetic, you indulge in the habit of singing and dancing. Give up, I entreat of you, such foolish extravagances. They do not become one who has entered your order." It was thus that the savant treated the Lord.

The followers of the Lord, however, could endure it no longer. Gopeenath had come to see his wife, a sister of the savant, and was putting up at his house. He now made a vow, in his own mind, that he would never again taste a morsel of food until he had extorted a pledge from the Lord to convert his brother-in-law, the savant. And so he fasted!

Said Gopeenath, addressing the Lord, who was sitting in his hut, made over to him by the savant: "My Lord, I am happy to inform you that the savant has promised to look after you."

Now this was said in a tone of sarcasm. But the Lord had not the least idea of it. He said, in grateful tones, "yes, I have to thank you, Gopeenath, for it. For, I owe all this attention from him, to his being your relation."

The reply did not commend itself to Gopeenath, whose object was to inflame the mind of the Lord against the savant. So he continued: "The savant is afraid lest you should fail to keep your vows, you being so young. But he has promised to take care of you; he will see that you don't fall a victim to your passions."

The Lord.—Yes, this is very, very good of him. He is a true and sincere well-wisher.

Gopeenath.—Besides, he has promised to re-initiate you,

and also to teach you the Vedas. He does not like your kirtan and your dances.

The Lord, who was the incarnation of simplicity, not having the least idea of what Gopeenath was aiming at, looked in a puzzled manner at him. But here Mukunda intervened. He said, "to make the matter short, my Lord, Gopeenath is fasting."

The Lord.—Gopeenath fasting! why?

Mukunda.—Sarvabhauma is a near relation of his. By him insults, as he thinks, have been levelled at you, and this he cannot bear. He has confided to me that the words of Sarvabhauma have penetrated deep into his heart, and are rankling there like poisoned shafts.

Here the Lord interrupted Mukunda. He said: "I don't see the reason for all this. We may not agree with all that he says, but his motives are excellent. It is quite true that I am young, and he shows a paternal affection for me when he reminds me of the fact. Believe me, my friends, you misjudge him."

Mukunda.—My Lord! You are indifferent alike to praise and blame. But, to us, who are frail men, his patronising and even contemptuous attitude towards you is almost intolerable. It is, therefore, well, perhaps that you should know that Gopeenath has made a vow never to take another morsel of food until you have promised to take pity upon Sarvabhauma and save him.

The Lord.—I must say, I think, you are all very unreasonable, and that the savant's conduct has been all that it should be. He is the natural Guru of us all; he holds the first position here and everywhere; he has no equal; nevertheless, you would fain confront him with a rival, nay, a superior, in me. Knowing this, he was justified in humiliating you by deprecating me.

Here Gopeenath burst into tears. He said: "My Lord, do not try to deceive me by such words as these. My brother-in-law, in spite of his great learning, is devoid of the grace of God; for, he is an unbeliever. He has spoken disrespectfully

of you, and that has endangered his after-life. Save him, or, I promise you, I will never more partake of food." Saying this, he fell at the feet of the Lord.

The Lord smiled. He said: "You are a bhakta of Krishna. He never forsakes a servant. You are determined to have your brother-in-law saved. That being the case, it comes to this that he is saved—surely Krishna is bound to save him."

When this was said, all the bhaktas, including Gopeenath, raised a shout of Haribole. They had no longer any doubt the savant would be saved!

This indirect promise of the Lord made matters smooth, otherwise, it would have been impossible for them all to live together in peace as the guests of Sarvabhauma. Gopeenath being now assured that his brother-in-law would, within a short time, be saved, no longer permitted the latter's contemptuous treatment of the Lord to vex his soul. The unbending attitude of Gopeenath, on the other hand, induced the savant to assail his relative still further by caustic and depreciatory remarks upon the Lord, addressed sometimes to him, and at other times directly to the Lord himself.

The next time Sarvabhauma saw the Lord, he addressed him in a more familiar and more pronouncedly patronizing tone. He said: "You must give up your antics; dancing and singing do not become an ascetic; and you must study the Vedas. I shall consider it a duty incumbent on me daily to read to you a portion of the sacred book." The more the savant raised himself, the more the Lord humbled himself.

The Lord, with great submission, acknowledged his obligations. He said, he placed himself at the absolute disposal of the savant. This humble attitude of the Lord again disarmed the savant.

The savant said: "You are a well-disposed young man, and therefore God will confer on you the choicest blessings.

From to-morrow we shall commence to read the Vedas together. We shall read them every afternoon in the Temple."

The following day the Lord and the savant met for the purpose in the Temple. The latter opened the Vedas and began to read. The Lord listened. This continued for about an hour, when the savant closed the book. The sage read and the Lord seemed to hear, but said nothing. In this manner passed the first day.

The second day arrived; the savant read and the Lord listened. There was no comment or remark from the Lord. The sage read a couplet and explained it, as he understood it. And then he read another and explained. In this manner an hour passed. And the second day's proceedings ended in the same manner as the first.

And thus six days passed!

Now the savant did not know what to make of his new pupil. Did he understand what was read to him? Probably he did, for he looked so very intelligent! But why then did he not offer any remark? Or, was it possible he did not understand anything at all of what was read to him? Or, was it that he did not like the sentiments?

Now, the last suggestion the savant thought, in his heart of hearts, to be the true one. "Is it possible that the youngster has an opinion of his own?" thought he. "Yes, it must be so, and that is probably the reason of his silence; for, I have observed shades of disapproval now and then passing across his face during my discourses. This state of things cannot be allowed to proceed any longer. We must come to a definite understanding to-morrow." Thus the savant thought on the night of the sixth day.

On the seventh day they again met. The savant opened his book; but before proceeding with the usual discourse, he began conversation with his pupil, thus. Said he: "Krishna-Chaitanya, I have been reading the Vedas to you these six days. How is it that you offer no comments?"

The Lord.—Your command to me was that I should listen, and that I have obeyed.

The savant.—That is quite true. But how can one go on reading and reading without some sort of relief? I expected to hear you offer some comments. You should, while I explain, let me know whether you understand me or not.

The Lord.—Any comment from me is impossible; for, I do not understand a syllable of your explanations.

The savant.—What! You don't understand a syllable? Yet you don't ask me to explain to you? What am I to understand from this? You are a strange creature indeed! When people do not understand, they ask for an explanation. How am I to know whether you are following me or not in my explanations? I took you to be a very intelligent young man, but your act belies that supposition.

The Lord replied humlby. He said: "The context is very clear. It is only your explanation that mystifies me."

Now, it must be borne in mind that the Vedas are the sacred writings of the Hindus. To be a Hindu, everyone must believe in those writings. To make any religious theory acceptable, it is, first of all, necessary to show that the Vedas support it. Shankaracharya had to show that his creed of Advaitabadism was supported by the Vedas. With that view he wrote a commentary on the Vedas, which he succeeded in making acceptable to all the learned men of the country. Indeed, this commentary almost supplanted the text. In this commentary, he, by his profound learning, twisted the meanings of the words so as to make the Vedas seem to teach, what they actually do not, the doctrine of Advaitabadism.

What the savant, who was, of course, a strict believer in the doctrines of Shankara, had been doing, was this. He would read a couplet from the text, and then read Shankara's commentary upon it. He would meddle no further with the text, but would

explain the commentary of Shankara, which established the doctrine of the Advaitabadees.

On the other hand, the doctrine which the Lord held up for the acceptance of mankind, was quite opposed to that of Shankara. The Lord taught that He and I are *not* the same ; and that the ego in man can hold communion with Him only by the cultivation of prem and bhakti. To be able to establish his teachings without committing any outrage upon Hinduism, the Lord was bound to prove that the Vedas supported his view.

The Lord in reply to the question of the savant repeated with deference that, the meaning of the context appeared to him to be pretty clear, but that he could not understand the savant's explanations.

This was a challenge thrown out to the savant,—a move for which the savant was in no wise prepared. In the first place, because he could not have believed it possible that there was any man in the universe who would dare throw down the gauntlet to him in regard to the interpretation of the Vedas ; and, in the second place, because he had formed the notion that a challenge of any sort was unlikely from the meek, guileless and unaggressive youth of twenty-four, who was sitting before him. So that for the moment he could not really apprehend what the Lord actually meant.

The savant.—I do not understand you, Krishna-Chaitanya ; you understand the text, but you do not understand my explanations. Do you mean that ?

The Lord did not give a direct reply. He said : "The text is as simple as anything can possibly be. But Shankara had certain pre-conceived theories of his own, and was obliged to twist the meaning of the text in order to support them."

The savant stared at the Lord with infinite astonishment. This was the first time that a human being had dared, in his presence, to find fault with the rendering of the Vedas by Shan-

kara, the universally-respected ascetic and the leader of all the ascetics in India. This was the first time that a man had spoken in this defiant manner to the savant, who believed that he had then no equal in India, except perhaps Prakashananda of Benares. And from whom did this challenge come? From a young man of twenty-four, the son of an indifferent Pundit of Nadia, who had never gone to Benares to study the Vedas, and one whom he had fancied the meekest and most helpless of men! After staring for a time, the savant thus delivered himself: "Do I understand you aright? Do you mean to assert that you understand the Vedas, but not the commentary of the great Shankara? Humph! There is a good deal of conceit within that submissive exterior. Let us then change places. Let me listen while you explain. Let me have a glimpse of your knowledge of the Vedas."

The Lord was not moved in the least. He replied, without noticing that the savant had lost his temper: "Pundit, it is not at all a matter of opinion. The Vedas are simple enough, and any child can understand them. Shankara wanted the sanction of the sacred writings to establish his own peculiar doctrines; but they, as a matter of fact, support the opposite one. Shankara had therefore to discard the simple meaning as not suiting his purpose, and replace it by fanciful interpretations of his own. You are explaining these fanciful renderings of his. But why should we have to consult them at all, when the text is before us? It is the simplest thing to understand the text. Just see." And the Lord began to repeat the Vedas, starting at the beginning. He repeated the first couplet, and then commenced to explain it, in his own way.

Sarvabhauma would have prevented the Lord from proceeding in this authoritative manner. He would have liked to browbeat him into silence; but the calm and confident manner in which the Lord began, compelled him to command a moment's patience to hear him. The Lord had not spoken many

words before he succeeded in arousing the savant's curiosity. The savant was a man of culture ; the only pleasure that he knew was what proceeded from the play of the intellect. When the Lord began his exposition, he heard something which he had never before heard, and this induced him to continue his attention.

As I said before, the sanction of the Vedas is necessary for a Hindu who would establish a religious doctrine. The Adwaitabadees refer to the renderings of Shankara to show that the Vedas support their creed. Now, the Dwaitabadees, that is to say, those who believed in a separate God, and in prem and in bhakti as the best means of attaining to Him, were no less bound, if they would make their doctrines acceptable to the Hindus, to bring them in conformity or seeming conformity with the same sacred writings. The Dwaitabadees had either to confess their doctrines as heretical, or to prove that they were supported by the teaching of the Vedas. Of course, the Lord might have rejected the Vedas altogether ; but that would have outraged the feelings of the Hindus, and he was averse from creating any sort of social disturbance. Jesus said that he came to fulfil and not to destroy, and that was also the path which the Lord followed. The Lord was thus the first to prove, in a systematic manner, that the Vedas did not sanction the doctrine of Adwaitabadees, but the very opposite. How, it may be asked, could two contending parties claim to refer to the same sacred writings for sanction for their respective creeds? But is not the Bible cited to justify slavery and war? The Sanskrit language is probably the richest in the world : its capacity is truly wonderful, almost unlimited.

The Lord repeated the first couplet and explained it in his own way. He said : "You see, Pundit, how easy it is if we will only accept the explanation which comes to us most naturally." He then repeated the rendering of Shankara and showed that it

could not be obtained in the natural way. Sharvabhauma, of course, was prepared with objections, but found no opportunity of raising them, because the Lord anticipated him, and raised them himself to refute them.

In this manner the Lord proceeded step by step and proved that the teaching of the Vedas was quite different from that attributed to them by Shankara, and that, among other truths, they supported the idea of a personal God, and the absolute necessity of prem and bhakti to attain Him.

Thus, for the first time, in a systematic manner, the Lord demonstrated that the Vedas really supported the doctrine of prem and bhakti in opposition to the seeming pantheism attributed to them. These wonderful researches of his were followed and extended by his great follower Baladeva Bidyabhusana of Bengal.

The savant continued to listen in a somewhat unamiable mood ; but his feelings of resentment became gradually weakened, and finally evaporated altogether. It soothed his soul to listen to the highly intellectual exposition of the Lord. "A nice, intellectual person of great culture, this young man is," thought he. But his wonder increased step by step. He soon discovered that the young man was not a mere learned man, but a savant. "No," he thought again, "he is more than a savant, he is a master." "So the young man is undoubtedly a greater man than I," thought the savant at length, with amazement.

The savant's tongue, as it were, clung to his palate ; indeed, surprise took away his power of speech. For, here was a young man of only twenty-four summers, who knew the Vedas more thoroughly than he did, nay, not only more than himself, but than all other interpreters of the sacred writings, who had preceeded him. As the Lord proceeded, his natural bashfulness vanished ; and his eloquent tongue began to deal with facts, ideas, imageries and arguments, as if they were mere play-things with him. Wonder

dazed the savant at that moment. "Hari, Hari," he exclaimed, thereby to give relief to his surcharged heart.

The Lord stopped at this interruption. "Go on, go on. I am all attention," urged the savant. And the Lord, interrupted for a moment by the ejaculation of the savant, proceeded.

"What powers, what wonderful powers," thought the savant. "No wonder Gopeenath thinks him God. If he is not the Lord God, he is no doubt Brihaspati." *

The fact was, the savant found himself affected in divers ways. His jealousy of the Lord disappeared, as admiration for him filled his heart. Nay, the discourse of the Lord was then giving him infinite pleasure, and he urged him to go on with his expositions. What can be more pleasing to a man of intellect than the display of intellectual feats seemingly impossible? The Lord repeated a couplet, analysed, and finally explained it in a thorough manner. His second step was to show that the lines could not have the meaning given to them by Shankara. The Lord proved his point by citing parallel passages; he also helped to prove it by showing that unless his rendering was accepted, the subsequent couplets would appear altogether purposeless and meaningless.

The ideas set forth by the Lord took, as it were, visible shape, and seemed to the savant in every respect faultless. When they were not really so, the Lord showed their weak points which had not occurred to the savant. The Lord exposed them only to show that the defects were more seeming than real. The savant thought that enough had been done by the Lord to prove his point. But no! The idea had only been moulded and shaped; it had now to be dressed in gorgeous language sparkling with imagery, similes and metaphors and beautified in innumerable other ways. Thus the Lord proceeded.

The savant was over-awed; he had not a word to say. His head, which he had hitherto been able to hold so high, came

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* The most learned Pundit among the dwellers in Heaven.

slowly down, as if in token of submission. His two hands met, unknown to himself, to express the submissive state of his mind. But yet he could not help now and then muttering expressions like these :—"What wonderful learning!" "What powers!" "What a gigantic and cultured intellect!"

Said the savant at last: "I was not aware that you are Vedamaya, *i. e.*, (literally) all-Vedas, and that the Vedas were play-things to you. You have to-day performed a wonderful feat; you have, to my mind, altogether changed the meaning and purport of the Vedas." The Lord interrupted the savant's words of praise and said: "Pundit, do not be surprised to find that the Vedas teach prem and bhakti. For, do you not know that the great saints, through whom the Vedas were revealed, hankered after bhakti?" And saying this the Lord repeated a sloka from the Sreemat Bhagavat, supporting this statement. The plain meaning of that sloka is that even those great saints, who have worshipped an impersonal God, have hankered after bhakti.

Here the savant asked the Lord to explain that particular sloka. The attitude of the savant was humble. "Yes," said the Lord, smiling. "I will do so, but let me first hear you explain it."

This was a request which rather pleased the savant. He had been, as it were, utterly routed, and here was an opportunity given to him of regaining as much of his position as was possible. So he began to explain the sloka with great pleasure, and with all the powers he possessed.

Now, as I said, the capacity of the Sanskrit language is unlimited. One word has various meanings, and there are various words to express one idea. And the language possesses advantages, which need not be enumerated here, that enable one to give different renderings of any given couplet. Indeed, attempts have been made to interpret big books like the Ramayana and Mahabharata throughout in a way not generally accepted. So Sarvabhauma took that opportunity of

showing his profound intellect and learning by explaining the couplet in different ways. Thus he first gave one explanation of the couplet, and then observed that it could be made to express something totally different, and explained it in another way. And in this manner he actually gave nine different renderings to that one sloka!

Sarvabhauma thought that he had been able to redeem his position, at least partially. For, had he not been able to explain one couplet in nine different ways? And who but the profoundest of Pundits could do that? He fancied that he had at length been able to show his superiority over the young ascetic in one branch of knowledge at least.

The Lord, as a matter of fact, expressed his admiration of the ingenuity with which the Pundit had explained the couplet. He said, "you have displayed powers only worthy of the greatest Pundit in the world." "But," continued he, "you have explained it from a learned man's point of view. The saint, who composed them, had perhaps other objects in view. Let me see if I can find them out." Saying this he began to explain the matter in his own way.

The attempt caused the sage some apprehension, as the expression of his pale face clearly revealed. He had, in fact, by this time, lost all confidence in himself, and, indeed, was thoroughly demoralised. He had learnt to regard the young ascetic, who sat before him, with dread, as a scholar capable of any feat. He, the greatest Pundit in India, had explained a couplet in nine different ways, and here is a young man who says that the couplet in question has yet other possible meanings! As a matter of fact, the feats already performed by the Lord in his presence showed the sage that there were good grounds for his apprehension.

Of the nine renderings of the savant, the Lord took no notice. He rejected them *in toto*. He first showed that there were so many words in the first and so many in the second line. He

then took each of these words for analysis to show how many meanings each of them had. Thus, for instance, the first word in the sloka was "atma." He said that this word had seven meanings. The second word was "aram." He showed that it had also several meanings. After he had shown that all the words in the couplet had more meanings than one, he began to explain the sloka in different ways. When the first rendering was done, Sarvabhauma looked at the Lord with infinite wonder. He found that the Lord had not meddled with any one of his nine renderings. But his wonder increased when he saw that the rendering of the Lord went to prove his view of religion, *viz.*, the superiority of prem and bhakti. The sage remarked: "Swamee, you are not only thoroughly versed in the Vedas, but also, I perceive, are a thorough master of language."

But the Lord took no notice of his remark, and began to explain the couplet in another way. The second rendering of the Lord was quite different from the first. Yet it supported the grand idea of the superiority of bhakti to all other means of salvation!

When the second rendering had been thoroughly explained, the Lord began with the third!

The sage felt that the power that the Lord was displaying was more than human.

It would be a little difficult for a foreigner to realize the difficult nature of the feat accomplished by the Lord. Of course, it is quite possible for a Sanskrit Pundit, profoundly learned in the language, to explain a couplet in different ways. But mind the fact that the most learned man of the period had already done it and explained it in nine different ways, and left no other opening for one who followed him to chalk out a new path for himself.

Then take into consideration that to render a sloka in different ways, is a feat which requires not only learning but profound thought. One cannot do it in a moment. The Lord had ut-

tered the sloka in course of conversation. He had no idea that Sarvabhauma would ask him to explain this particular sloka to him. So, he had not come prepared with the different renderings to dazzle the sage by his learning. He had incidentally repeated the sloka, and the sage had subjected it to his powerful intellect and crushed out of it nine different renderings. When this was done, it was made over to the Lord for fresh attempts upon it in the same direction.

Besides, the most wonderful part of the feat perhaps was, that though the Lord explained the sloka in different ways, each rendering, though separate from all the others, established the doctrine of the superiority of bhakti over all other means of salvation!

Thus, the Lord continued to furnish different renderings of the same sloka to the savant, who was step by step losing his senses in wonderment. After each such rendering the sage uttered something to express his infinite wonder, though this he did more to himself than to the Lord, who was then engrossed with his own thoughts and work. Said the sage: "Hari, Hari! Such powers are beyond the capacity of men." He said again: "If he, the Lord, had been simply Brihaspati, I would have still ventured to challenge him; but he seems something more." And again: "Only the Goddess of learning, Saraswatee, is capable of such a feat. Is this young ascetic Saraswatee in disguise? Or, perhaps, her husband Krishna himself?"

Indeed, the sage was more fitted to appreciate the powers displayed by the Lord than any outside public possibly could be. Almost at the outset he had come to admit that he himself was no match for the Lord in learning, and that his power was more than human. But, at last, he came to suspect that perhaps he might be no less a Being than Sree Krishna Who had come there to humble his (the savant's) pride,—that pride by which he had crushed in his day the pride of an infinite number of the pro-

foundest sages of the age. Each new rendering seemed a fresh blow aimed at him and his scholarship, and at length he found it impossible to bear the position any longer. So, when the Lord had actually furnished eighteen such renderings, he fell at the feet of the Lord, utterly helpless, surrendering himself absolutely.*

He thus addressed the Lord: "Pardon me for having offended you. I treated you as an inferior, unaware that you had no equal among the sons of men." He then expressed his submission, by catching hold of the Lord's feet, and waited for some words of consolation from the Lord. He expected to hear from him some words of consolation, but hearing none he gazed at the Lord,—to find a wonderful sight!

The young ascetic had disappeared, and in his place was standing a six-armed divinity. With two of his arms he carried a bow and arrows; with two he played on a flute, and with the remaining two he carried a staff and a mendicant's cup!

Sarvabhauma fainted away.

When he rose, he found the young ascetic tending him and trying to arouse him. "Where is He gone?" cried the sage, as he vacantly looked around him, but the Lord took no notice of his query and only said in reply,—"It is time to go home, let us go." The sage rose, and he and the Lord both left the Temple in silence. The Lord rapidly proceeded to his hut, while Sarvabhauma entered his own apartments in a semi-conscious state.

What did he see? thought the sage. Was it an hallucination or a vision revealed to him by the most High? What did the vision mean? In the significance of the vision he had not the

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* The Lord, if he had not been interrupted by the sage, would have furnished other renderings. Indeed, at a later period, he gave sixty different readings to that one couplet. The couplet is extant, as I said before, as also his sixty different renderings, and continue to elicit infinite admiration from the profoundest of Sanskrit scholars.

least doubt. In India two Avatars were worshipped, Rama and Krishna, before the advent of Lord Gauranga. Rama flourished as a warrior-king, with the object of destroying wicked kings who oppressed human beings. He is, therefore, represented with a bow and arrow. Sree Krishna came to show men that the Lord God had tender human qualities, and is represented in the act of playing a flute. The vision then meant that the Being, who is worshipped as Rama and Krishna, had appeared again with a staff and mendicant's cup, to beg love of his creatures.* It meant that Personal God is a fact.

So He is come! thought the sage. So, what the saints assert is all true, and what we learned men are disposed to consider as mere hallucination is real, *viz.*, that man is not an animal, and has a bright destiny! Oh happy Sarvabhauma! happy man! Sarvabhauma wept with joy.

It comes to this then, thought the sage, that the Lord God is a most considerate and kind-hearted Being. He has created men for their own happiness. Where is misery then? Oh Misery! I defy thee. Don't now approach me. I now know that I am in the lap of my loving Father, Who is strong enough to be able to protect me, and good enough to provide me with all that I require to make me happy. What is it to man, if the universe disappears by a cataclysm? What does he gain if he earns the sovereignty of the whole world, since man is destined for other things than the pleasures derived from the exercise of the baser feelings?

* As I said before, Messiahs, for very good reasons, don't come to break, but to establish and develop ancient faiths. At a subsequent period, another great man, Ramananda, saw the Lord as Krishna in the act of playing His flute. He was permitted to see the beautiful Krishna because he was a believer. But the sage was in need of proof, for, he was not a believer, and, therefore he had to see the Lord as a six-handed divinity. Ramananda wanted an object of love, and he saw Sree Krishna; the sage wanted proofs, and he had them.

And again, thought the sage: Oh the trouble that I took to acquire learning! But what is my learning worth? The one knowledge that I have acquired to-day that there is a God,—a loving God Who does not forget His creatures below,—is infinite times worth more than all the learning that I acquired with such infinite troubles.

In the midst of these celestial joys, the poor human being, Sarvabhauma, was now and then disturbed by the appearance of doubts.

But may not all that be hallucination? And he shuddered as the doubt threatened to destroy the ecstacy which hope had awakened in his mind.

And then he wept in sorrow. But other thoughts soon relieved him. "The vision may be a hallucination," thought he; "but I have yet something more substantial to base my faith on. Have I not found a greater savant than Shankara? It may be all a vision, but the new rendering of the Vedas is not a vision, and this in itself is proof enough to establish the fact that the young ascetic is more than a man. And then the way he explained the sloka! That certainly was not a hallucination. Surely, that was a feat beyond human powers. There is no doubt, the young man is Sree Krishna. And I treated him as an inferior and made him an object of ridicule to my pupils!" And he again shuddered.

Thus he passed the night in despair and ecstacy alternately. He had just fallen asleep when a knock at the door announced to him that the young Swamee was seeking him!

It came about in this way. The Lord, having passed the night in his hut, proceeded to the Temple early in the morning, as usual with him. But, on that morning, he entered into the innermost apartment where Jagannath was sitting, which he had not done before. As he appeared before Jagannath, two of His servants presented themselves before him, one with a garland of

The Lord

flowers, which he put on the neck of the Lord; and the other carried some *prosad*, which he made also over to him (the Lord). *Prosad* is, as I said before, the offering made to God. In this case, it was cooked rice which had been offered to Jagannath.

The Lord accepted the garland by bending his head, and the *prosad* he tied up in a corner of his garment, and left the place. The bhaktas who had, as usual, accompanied the Lord, saw all these strange proceedings with wonder. The Lord came out, and, with that garland round his neck and *prosad* in his cloth, ran—where? The bhaktas, of course, followed him to find out. He took the road towards the house of Sarvabhauma. There were guards in the outer house, but the Lord took no notice of them, and they, recognising him, did not dare interfere. He reached the sleeping apartment of the savant and called to the latter by name.

Now, a Brahmin boy was sleeping in the veranda. He rose, and seeing the Lord, knocked at the door of the sleeping room of Sarvabhauma, as I said above. The savant had just then closed his eyes. He rose with a start. "Who is it that calls?" he asked. And on learning that the Lord had come, he quickly opened the door, and seeing the Lord he fell at his feet, the Lord blessing, as usual with him, with the words, "May thy soul abide in Krishna!"

They both sat down, and the Lord took the handful of *prosad* (which is nothing more or less than cooked rice) and presented it to the sage with these words: "This is the *prosad* from Jagannath; take it."

Now, according to the bhaktas, the *prosad* is a holy thing which everyone ought to consider a most precious gift of Heaven. According to the ordinary usage of the Hindus however, cooked rice is an abomination, whose touch pollutes the hand, and which can be purified only by the washing. To put the matter shortly, for Sarvabhauma, who had just got out of bed,

who had not washed his face, bathed and performed his poojah,—for him to take cooked rice, at that hour of the morning, simply because it was *prosad*, would be a great social outrage. No Hindu would have done it; and Sarvabhauma, who gave laws to the Hindus, would not have certainly done it under ordinary circumstances.

But when the Lord presented him with the *prosad* smiling, and with the request "take it," he could not resist. He took the cooked rice in both hands with great reverence, and at once swallowed it, repeating two slokas in justification of his act, which said in effect that when the *prosad* of God comes to hand, let it be eaten at once, irrespective of any consideration of time, place, or other matters.

Here the sage, probably for the first time in his life, transgressed the precepts of ordinary Hinduism. Now, as also then, the Hindus were weighted with many formal ceremonies and outward observances, which took the life out of sweet religion itself. These rules the Brahmins had imposed on their flocks, in order to maintain their own absolute superiority over all the other castes. To accomplish this, they had themselves strictly to observe their own ordinances. And the result was that the Brahmins themselves came to be, like the others, the slaves of customs, artificially established, for the purpose of maintaining their own superiority. But the Lord taught the religion of the heart; he had nothing to do with the many absurd ceremonies that enslaved and demoralised society. Hindu society, however, dominated by the Brahmins, was strong, and he had, therefore, to demolish the superstructure, raised by the practice of ages, by assailing it in an indirect manner. Thus, he did not say that this or that system ought to be destroyed; for, if he had done so, society would have risen against him at once. Thus, he did not say anything against caste. But, what he said was this: "The Chandal (the lowest of the castes) is superior to the Brahmin, if

he is a bhakta of God, and the latter not." The Lord preached this doctrine which no rational man could find fault with, and also practised it himself. It was in this manner that the caste system was reformed. Thus Haridas was a Mussulman, but the Lord made his bhaktas do him the same honour as they would to the highest of Brahmins. A Brahmin would never take cooked rice in the morning without washing his face, bathing, and performing his usual poojah. If any one were to do so, he would be expelled from society. When the Lord, however, presented the sage with the *prosad*, he took it with due submission, rather with warmth. Here the sage gave evidence that he was ready, for the sake of Krishna, to give up society.

Let us now turn to the Krishna-leela. Says Radha to her attendant Gopees: "Listen! the flute of my Beloved is beckoning me. I must go. I cannot remain. Those of you who wish to follow me, come. If you are afraid of scandal and of your relations, do not approach me. Such beings do not deserve to possess my Beloved. My Beloved cannot be won without sacrifice. If you will not forsake your relations, and brave society's wrath, for Krishna, why should Krishna be yours? If you desire to capture Him, you must, first of all, surrender everything to Him."

Now, my kind reader, do you understand the significance of the words put in the mouth of Radha? In the present instance the Radha is the Lord, and Sarvabhauma is a Gopee. This Gopee (Sarvabhauma) has a husband, *viz.*, his social obligations, superstitions, and so forth. The Lord subjects him to the test by putting *prosad* in his hands. Is Sarvabhauma desirous of possessing Krishna? If so, let him throw away his social shackles and follow him. The sage accepted the challenge, and showed his willingness to trample the obligations of society under foot, and to bear the consequences, in order to win Krishna. Thus he took the *prosad* and thereby proved that he was prepared to

disobey one of the formal precepts of ordinary Hinduism for the purpose of attaining to His lotus feet. As soon as Sarvabhauma accepted the *prosad*, he gave up society for His sake.

Sarvabhauma accepted the *prosad* reverentially and—fell down in a swoon !

His condition is thus described in the book Chaitanya Chandrodaya : "He fell down as if seized with an epileptic fit. He foamed at the mouth, and there was a gurgling sound in his throat. From his vacant eyes tears trickled down his cheeks, and the hair over his whole body stood on end."

Shortly after having recovered the use of his limbs, he began to roll on the ground.

His family, including his wife, son, daughter, sister and others, beheld the spectacle with alarm and anxiety, but did not dare interfere ; indeed, there was no necessity for interference, for, the Lord, after a short interval, restored him to consciousness, by touching his body and gently shaking him.

The sage sat up and looked at the Lord in a half-conscious state. The Lord then, catching hold of his hand, and rising with him, addressed the sage thus (*vide* "Chaitanya Charitamrita") :

"To-day I have conquered the universe ; to-day I feel I have acquired the kingdom of Heaven. To-day all my desires have been fulfilled. For, to-day you, the savant of savants, have cut the shackles which bind you to forms and society, for the sake of Krishna. To-day you have become a sincere servant of the Lord, to-day the Lord has taken you into His bosom, to-day you become a free-man to ascend high and higher every day. To-day your soul has been purified, and thereby rendered capable of communing with the most High."

Having delivered this address, he embraced the sage with a love which knows no bounds !

The address and embrace of the Lord filled the sage with the holy spirit. It permeated his body through its whole extent,

as appeared from the *pulak* that sprung from it. As during the flood tide wave after wave mounts the Ganges, so he found his heart overtaken by wave after wave of ecstacy, till at length, in the excess of his joy, he began to dance !

Now the spectacle of a dance of a hippopotamus may be within the range of possibility, but that of the Hindu sage like Sarvabhauma seemed not to be so. Of course, his dance did not reveal much grace, but it accomplished its purpose by relieving his overcharged heart, and proving the extent of his joy.

Thus the Lord and the sage held each other's hands, and gazed tenderly at each other, while they danced. And there were present, the members of Sarvabhauma's family, his servants, and—his brother-in-law Gopeenath !

Tears of joy trickled down the cheeks of Gopeenath, while he looked at the Lord gratefully and his brother-in-law, the sage, approvingly. But then he addressed Sarvabhauma : "Fie ! what are you doing ? Are you not ashamed of yourself dancing with uplifted arms like a drunken man ? Have you forgotten yourself ? What will your pupils say ? What will the world say ? The great Sarvabhauma dancing !"

The sage looked at Gopeenath sweetly, and composed a sloka then and there. It means this : "Let evil-tongued people say whatever they like ; what do we care ? Let us, in the meantime, get intoxicated by drinking prem, and dance, and roll on the ground in the joy of our hearts !"

Now the followers of the Lord firmly believe that the Lord chose the only method possible, of converting Sarvabhauma. His vanity blinded him, which made him think that he was more intelligent and more learned than the rest of his fellows and, therefore, above instruction. His vanity made it impossible for others to instil any idea into his mind ; for, he felt that his mind was already full. To be brought into the fold of the Lord, the first thing necessary, therefore, was to cure him of his

vanity. When, therefore, Sarvabhauma had been made to feel that he was after all a very insignificant and ignorant creature, he was given the privilege of witnessing a vision, in the shape of a six-armed figure. This vision had a world of meaning in it which the sage understood, and which it was the object of the Lord to convey.

At the moment he beheld it, his heart having already been humbled, he had no difficulty in gleaning from there a definite idea of religion. At night he passed his time in alternate ecstacy and doubt. One other operation, however, remained in order to make him a bhakta. There are men who believe in everything, but yet do not entertain any tender feeling for God,—worldliness does not permit them to do so. The sight of the six-handed divinity and the intellectual capacity displayed by the Lord, made Sarvabhauma a believer,—that is all. But the Lord wanted to make an active bhakta of him, and, therefore, he filled him with prem and bhakti. With the *prosad* he "imparted the holy influence"* to the sage.

The Lord left the sage and hurriedly returned to his hut. The sage, however, followed him soon after, accompanied by a servant. His first duty everyday had been, as soon as he left his house in the morning, to pay a visit to Jagannath; but on this particular day, he neglected the "wooden God" and proceeded towards the "moving God," who has now become accessible. The servant, who followed, had seen a few moments before the insane exhibitions of the sage, and he naturally thought that the sage was still under the same influence, in consequence of which he had forgotten the road to the Temple. So he reminded his master that that was not the way to the Temple. The sage replied that he was aware of the fact, and while he spoke, he smiled; for, he could gauge the motives which had

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* The true Guru, or the master, when initiating a pupil, has "to impart the holy influence" to him.

inspired his servants to warn him of his mistake. Gopeenath had preceded him.

In a very short time he was standing before the Lord with folded hands. Both he and the Lord were then in a sober state. The Lord had then recovered his normal condition completely; indeed, he had almost forgotten all that he had done a short while before, namely, his going to the Temple for the *prosad*, his offering it to the sage, its effect upon the latter, his dancing with him, etc., etc. Possibly he had only a very faint remembrance of them.

The sage prostrated himself before the Lord,—this time, of course, with great willingness. And then, standing before him with folded hands, he uttered a sloka, composed then and there, which means this :—"The motives that guide God Almighty in His dealings with mankind, are unfathomable. How is it possible for us, puny mortals, to comprehend the fact that He is now in our midst, acting the part of a man? A touch-stone is externally a piece of stone only. Its worth cannot be recognised until it has been put to the test of converting iron into gold."

Then he composed another sloka. Both of them he analysed in this manner. Said he: "My Lord, mine has been an intellectual life. I have misspent it in determining the ethics of fallacies and cause and effect. My mind has in this manner become like a piece of stone,—worthless, unbending and unmeltable. You have by your divine alchemy converted and melted, and thereafter, by your mercy, have cast it in a mould of your own making. It is an easier task by far to reclaim a simple mind, ignorant sinner, than a so-called sage like me. I tested you by my own art—Logic. I saw that in outward appearance you were just like other men, and I took you to be one like us. How was it possible for me to know that you had put on the garb on a Sannyasee to save sinners and to humble the pride of the arrogant for the purpose of reclaiming them?"

And here the sage burst into tears. He began again :

"My Lord, forgive me for the discourtesy that I was led to show you. Light first dawned on me when I saw you analysing the Vedas. When I heard your eighteen different readings of a sloka, I was confirmed in my belief. Now, my Lord, accept what little of myself I have, for, Thou hast become the mightiest owner of everything I possessed, my heart included."

And Sarvabhauma wept like a child. But what was the Lord doing ? He gazed at the sage as might a child to realise the purpose of his observations. It took him some time to understand the sage, for, as I said before, he had almost forgotten all the incidents, all the part he had taken in bringing them about but a short while before. He, however, at length understood that the sage was addressing him, just as he would have done if he had come face to face with God Almighty ! If he had been able to understand this before, he would have stopped the mouth of the savant as soon as he had opened it. As soon as the Lord came to know what the sage was aiming at, he blushed, shuddered and closed his ears with his fingers. He said, "Forbear, Pundit, do not slay me in that manner. I am, as your child, absolutely at your disposal. I have already surrendered myself to you entirely. If at length you have found bhakti, thank Jagannath for it, Who is the author of all good."

And his loving face was suffused with the lustre of bhakti at the mention of Jagannath !

The sage did not like these protestations, however. He said : "No longer am I a stranger to Thee. Treat me as Thou dost Thy dear servant Gopeenath ! Accept me as a member of Thy family in this Avatar."

Now was Gopeenath's time for sweet revenge ! He said : "Pundit ! Is it not time that you should find out a Sannyasee, belonging to a higher class of ascetics, to re-initiate this young man, your *protege* ? Who knows but he may fall a victim to

his passion? And how far have you, Pundit, proceeded in teaching him the Vedas?"

Sarvabhauma laughed, and all the bhaktas of the Lord joined in the merriment. He, however, became grave almost immediately and looked at Gopeenath with grateful eyes, glistening with tears, and addressed him. "Gopeenath!" said he, "I owe all this to your intercession. The Lord took pity on me for no merit of my own, but simply because I am a relative of yours, and you are a servant of his."

As soon as the sage had said this, the Lord rose to embrace him, and they became at once locked in each other's arms.

Sarvabhauma from that day was an ardent follower of the Lord. With the consent of the king, he had the six-handed Figure, which he had seen, represented in the Temple of Jagannath, and the Figure can be seen there even now. He composed one hundred most beautiful slokas, describing the Lord, and these are extant. From them one can learn how the Lord had presented himself to his eyes, heart and intellect. They are so beautiful that I must ask those, who can, to read them in original Sanskrit. These slokas describe the Lord in such vivid colours as to lead one to fancy that he is present to his eyes. Here is the translation of three of these slokas :—

I salute Thee, the son of Shachee, whose golden-hued body is constantly covered with all the signs of prem and bhakti and who is the merciful saviour of mankind.

I salute Thee, the son of Shachee, whose lotus eyes are melting like clouds and who is constantly uttering his own name (that is Krishna) in a state of ecstacy.

I salute Thee, the son of Sachee, who is no other than the son of Nanda (Sree Krishna) and who has come down to this earth as an Avatar to establish true religion.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TRIP TO THE SOUTH.

THE Lord wanted to remain concealed from the public gaze, and the sage Sarvabhauma tried his best to help him in the endeavour. But to his followers he preferred another request, namely, that they would permit him to proceed to South India !

Now, at the time when the Lord promised his mother to remain at Puri, his bhaktas obtained a pledge from him that he would pass his life in that holy shrine. When, therefore, the Lord expressed a wish to proceed south, Nitai reminded him of his promise.

The Lord.—I will go there only for a short time, and will then come back.

Nitai.—May I inquire the object of your intended visit ?

The Lord.—To search for my elder brother, Vishwarup.

Nitai.—But you know he has quitted his body and secured his ascension.

The Lord.—So I have heard, but I must find it for myself. It is a sacred duty which I owe to my dear brother.

Nitai.—All right. When shall we start ?

The Lord.—I must go alone. You have one and all contrived to make me your slave ; through the love you bear me, I have lost all my independence. You, Sreepad Nityananda, appear to imagine that I have no need to attempt to save myself by acquiring prem, and that my sole duty consists in pleasing

my friends. Consequently you will not allow me to worship Krishna to my heart's content. You, Jagadananda, endeavour, day and night, to seduce me from my duties, and would fain have me live like a householder, feasting on the finest fare and sleeping on a bed of the finest cotton. You, Mukunda, by your mournful face,—mournful because of my hard life,—you impose a heavier burden upon me than the so-called hard life itself. Let me go alone. Allow me to enjoy a little independence for a few months, please.

Nitai, who understood how dangerous it would be to accede to this request, said : "My Lord! Do not think of going alone; that we can never permit. If nevertheless you go, it will be over our dead bodies. However, let us consult Sarvabhauma."

On the matter being referred to the sage, he came to the Lord, and endeavoured to dissuade him from going alone.

The Lord.—Pundit, pray, do not throw obstacles in my way. I must go in search of my brother.

Sarvabhauma.—Your real object, my Lord, is to bring the light of salvation to the south, which is immersed in the darkness of Atheism and Adwaitabadism. Any way, you cannot be permitted to go unattended.

Nitai.—Who would carry your staff and cup? You would throw them away in your first fit of prem. Who would take care of you when, in a fit, you remain unconscious for hours or even days? Allow me to accompany you; I know the south—I have travelled all through the country.

But the Lord was still unwilling to take Nitai or any other bhakta along with him. For, the devoted bhaktas sought his ease and comfort and keenly suffered when he was put to any discomfort. Eventually, however, he was persuaded to take Govinda. Seeing the sorrows of the bhaktas, the Lord wanted to console them. Said he : "Why make a fuss about such a trifling affair? I will simply accomplish my object and then come back. You

can wait here for my return. I will not tarry on the way." He was destined, however, to traverse a continent, and it actually took him full two years to accomplish this. Said the sage Sarvabhauma: "I would bear the loss of a hundred sons, rather than that of your company," and then he wept. When the Lord was taking leave of Sarvabhauma at Puri, the latter fainted away; and the Lord, seeing this, mournfully hastened his departure. Having regained consciousness, the sage was led by his servants back to his residence. Nitai and others accompanied the Lord as far as Alalnath, about a day's journey from Puri, where there is a temple.

On their arrival at Alalnath, Nitai and the other bhaktas were surprised to find their party surrounded by thousands of men. "Who brought them there?" they pondered, and all came to the conclusion that it was the Lord who had attracted them! The great majority, by gazing upon the divine figure of the Lord, were filled with bhakti, and they passed the day and night in kirtan, in dancing and singing the holy name of Hari.

Then Nitai said to his companions: "Do you now understand why the Lord is going south? The plea of searching for Vishwarup, who has long since left the flesh,* is a mere pretence. The real object is the reformation of the south." Says the "Chaitanya Charitamrita": "The powers exhibited by the Lord in the south were far greater than those hitherto displayed by him." We shall revert to this subject presently.

The Lord took leave of his bhaktas at Alalnath. They fell down as if struck dead. They had left everything to follow him. They must now remain at Puri until his return! The moon-like face of the Lord was overcast with sorrow as he took leave of his bhaktas, whose grief, at losing him, was painful to his tender heart. He left them, however, and proceeded on his way

* The followers of the Lord never say "dead" or "died," but "left his body" or "quitted his body" or "got Krishna," etc. etc.

mournfully. The bhaktas passed the day, almost unconscious. The following day they came back to Puri slowly, to wait there till the return of the Lord.

When he had gone a little way, the Lord raised his hands towards Heaven and uttered a sloka to this effect: "Krishna, take care of me." With this sloka, constantly on his lips, he proceeded upon his long journey southward, followed by Govinda!

"Krishna, take care of me," this he repeated in a sonorous and sweet voice as he proceeded with uplifted arms.

What do we see now? A youth of twenty-five, with a lovely face, well-proportioned limbs, and Herculean frame; with his long arms turned upwards, and calling upon Krishna for protection, proceeding on his way, unconscious of his surroundings. Look at his face, and you are irresistibly attracted, not only by its beauty, but its spiritual grandeur. But you are not only attracted but moved to tears, by the softness of his look and the pathos of his voice, when uttering his prayers to his Krishna. He is proceeding on his way like a drunken man beside himself; yet consious of one great idea, which is, that the world to him is Krishna and that the One Being in existence is his Beloved. The worldly man looks at him, and finds his heart as if broken at the sight the Lord presents. For, this young man, designed by nature to shine in society, to be loved and admired by thousands, and to enjoy all its legitimate pleasures, is now alone in the world with the shell of a cocoanut for his cup, and a few pieces of rags round his loins for his only property! He is proceeding in rain and sun, through jungles and cities, with infinite toil, hungry and sleepless, to draw men to the lotus feet of God!

We can picture our beloved Lord passing through strange places, sparsely inhabited tracts, and dense forests, feeding now on fruits, and now on a handful of rice, and at night content with the meanest accommodation, a thatched shed, or the shed

of some large tree. When darkness overtook himself and his companion in the jungle, he leant against some gigantic trunk, repeating the name of Krishna, and so continued till dawn, whilst Govinda slept almost at his feet, securely and in peace, though the tiger, the rhinoceros and the elephant passed to and fro close by.

For keeping notes of this journey, Govinda deserves the gratitude of mankind. With the exception of a few preliminary pages these notes are extant and have been published.

When passing through villages or towns, the Lord and his companion were hospitably entertained; but when their route lay through vast stretches of forests, they had to be content with wild fruits alone. Govinda remarks that such was the enthusiasm which he derived from the company of the Lord that hunger and thirst rarely troubled him much. Nevertheless the hardships and privations they endured, not only told upon Govinda, but also, though more slightly, on the Herculean constitution of the Lord. It breaks the heart of the author to record how frequent fasts and sleepless nights actually made the Lord grow thinner, day by day!

The people of those parts became impressed with the idea that Sree Krishna himself, having appropriated the body of a Sannyasee, was travelling among them. Indeed, this rumour preceded the Lord. Govinda saw with astonishment, on their arrival at a village, that the rumour of the wandering of Sree Krishna, in the guise of a mendicant, had preceded them! And thus it happened, that wherever the Lord went, if the place was at all populous, he found a large number of men assembled, as if to welcome him.

In what manner did the Lord save people? The process is described in that great book, the "Chaitanya Charitamrita," which is "worshipped" by the Vaishnavas much more reverentially than the Bible is worshipped by the Christians:

"The Lord proceeded on his way repeating the sloka, 'Krishna, take care of me.' If the Lord happened to meet a man as he walked along, he addressed him saying, 'say Hari.' Though utterly absorbed in his Krishna, he is not forgetful of the claims of sinners upon him. 'Say Hari,' says the Lord to the sinner he comes across. Whereupon the man is immediately overtaken by bhakti, and repeating the names, Hari and Krishna, follows the Lord. When he had thus followed him *for some time*, the Lord suddenly turns back and embraces him. By this means the man is filled with holy influence *empowering him to save others.* The Lord then bids him return home and proclaim bhakti for Hari to the people."

Observe the process adopted by the Lord. When he induces a man to say Hari, the man gets sufficient strength to be able to do it with bhakti, but not to convert others. So the man utters the name of Hari and follows the Lord *for some time.**

This process prepares him to receive the higher power of "imparting the influence" to others. And then the Lord imparts that power to him by an embrace. When that man has been embraced, he becomes competent to save others. And then what does he do? Let us continue the quotation from the Chaitanya Charitamrita, begun above:—

"The man returns to his village, dancing, laughing, weeping and uttering the name of Krishna, like a man possessed. He does more. He asks everyone to say 'Hari,' and everyone obeys, as if compelled by an irresistible force. Thus the entire village is saved. The rumour spreads that the village has gone mad, and neighbours come to see the sport! But they also catch the

* The statement in that great book, *Chaitanya Charitamrita*, that the noviciate had, after he had been addressed by the Master, to wait for some time till finally blessed, is a proof positive that the author and his contemporaries knew very well that the Lord followed a well-defined natural process for the purposes of imparting the holy spirit.

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holy infection, which they carry home with them! It was thus that the holy spirit was communicated from man to man and village to village; and, in this manner, the inhabitants of every district through which the Lord passed, was saved. And he adopted this procedure in saving sinners throughout his travels, as far as Cape Comorin, and back again."

Says the same authority further: "Not that the men, who were saved by the Lord, were in all cases merely given a feeling of bhakti for Krishna: to the more capable amongst them, was also imparted a knowledge of *the philosophy of Vaishnavism*." * We are further assured that the Lord was constrained to adopt this summary method of conversion, because the time at his disposal was too short for the adoption of any slower process.

On his way the Lord embraced Basudeva, the leper. Basudeva was a good man; his loathsome disease had chastened his heart. He was obliged to live apart from his fellows, on account of the stench emitted by his body. Hearing that an ascetic, who was undoubtedly Sree Krishna himself, had appeared in the Temple of Kurma, near which he lived, he immediately took up his staff and proceeded thither. On his arrival at the Temple he learnt that the Lord had left the place half an hour before. Thereupon he fainted from disappointment and sorrow, exclaiming as he fell, "Krishna, hast thou forsaken me?"

The Lord, who had proceeded on his way about a couple of miles, heard the exclamation, and stopped for a moment as if to listen. Being assured of the state of affairs, he turned his back, and ran towards the Temple from which he had come. Arrived at

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* The seed of a mango is left in a desert in a protected place. The man returns after a dozen years to find in the place a mango-tree and also many young plants of the tree. He finds fruits in the tree; they are just as mangoes are. The Lord thus, by his peculiar process, implanted the see of prem and bhakti into the heart of those he saved, and the seed germinate, grew into a tree, bore fruits and produced many plants.

the Temple he lifted the fainting leper in his arms, and embraced him, in spite of the foul sores which covered his body and the intolerable stench which they emitted.

Locked in each other's arms, they both sank to the floor, from which Basudeva rose, a perfectly sound man !

Said Basudeva : "What hast Thou done, Lord ? I came not to be healed—I came to see Thy lotus feet. My loathsome disease taught me humility, and I had hopes of acquiring Thee. But a sound body and perfect health will again generate pride and vanity in my mind."

"No, my son," said the Lord, "Sree Krishna has absolutely accepted you on account of your unparalleled humility and your charity towards the meanest insect, and even to those worms which fed upon your body."

Basudeva used to pick up the maggots that fell down from his sores, to put them back there, and "this unparalleled charity," says the chronicler, "entitled him to the especial favour of the the Lord !" For, he believed that all living things being creatures of Krishna, everyone had an equal right to live, and that he had no right to deprive the worms, who feasted upon his body, of their natural food ! This miracle of the Lord procured him a new name, *viz.*, "The saviour of Basudeva."

The most important personage whom the Lord met in the south was Raja Ramananda Ray, the Governor of the Southern Provinces of the Empire of Pratap-rudra, the King of Orissa, who resided in his capital city called Bidyanagar. He was a profoundly learned man, so much so that he held frequent discussions with Sarvabhauma himself about the nature of God and other higher matters. Ramananda was a believer in a God of Love, that is to say, in Sree Krishna. Sarvabhauma was atheistical in his religious belief ; he therefore always chaffed the Governor, as intellectual and learned men will do even now whenever they come across a pious man, for his superstition.

But Sarvabhauma having been converted by the Lord, had now come to perceive the merits of his old friend and antagonist Ramananda. So when the Lord was leaving him for the south, the sage asked him to favour Ramananda with a visit, and allow the Governor an opportunity of associating with him, and the Lord had agreed to this arrangement.

The Lord having crossed the Godavery, bathed, and sat at a little distance from the *ghat* (bathing-place), immersed in his own thought. That was the *ghat* where Ramananda occassionally bathed; and on this particular day, an irresistible impulse led him to come there for that purpose;—no doubt he was attracted by the Lord. He came in great state, accompanied by about a thousand men, with bands playing and banners flying. Having bathed, his eyes suddenly encountered the divine figure of the Lord, sitting at some distance from the *ghat*.

He himself was a bhakta of the first class; he had, therefore, no great veneration for Sannyasees, because they, generally speaking, believed in doctrines which are seemingly pantheistic. Holy, pure, austere and learned as these anchorites were, a bhakta yet did not much care for their company, on account of the seemingly atheistical atmosphere that surrounded them. But the Sannyasee that the Raja saw had a strange fascination, which enthralled his heart. His beauty and grace were superhuman, and everything in him seemed to indicate that he was drunk with prem. The Raja hastened to the Lord and reverentially prostrated himself before him. It must be borne in mind that in India kings occupied only a subordinate position.

The Lord who was expecting the Raja, immediately rose, exclaiming, "say Krishna," and then asked, "are you Ramananda?" The Raja replied that he was that mean sinner. The Lord uttered a *hunkar*, caught him by the arms and gave him an ardent embrace! The result was, as usual, they both fell down, locked in each other's arms, in a deep swoon! The Raja's people

hastened to see what the matter was. And they saw that both the Lord and the Raja were in a state of unconsciousness. Their persons were covered with *pulak*; their breathing was seemingly suspended, and tears trickled down their half-shut eyes. The sight softened them in an unaccountable manner, and they were profoundly moved by a feeling of bhakti, as their external behaviour showed.

After a while the Lord and the Raja regained consciousness, and arose. They gazed at each other tenderly and wistfully for some time, when the former broke silence. Said the Lord: "While coming this way from Puri, Pundit Sarvabhauma, who is exceedingly kind to me, bade me to see the great saint Ramananda, and so I am here. Lucky I am that I have been so successful in finding access to you."

The Raja replied: "To-day, no doubt, forms a turning-point in my life. You seem to bear a message from Heaven, for, the powers that you possess are more than human. Look, how the mere sight of you has deeply moved my followers,—about one thousand in number. The ignorant, the sinner, the sceptic amongst them have all been filled with bhakti, as their behaviour shows. See how they are weeping, dancing and uttering the name of Krishna and Hari. Mere man does not possess such powers." The Lord wanted to interrupt the Raja, but his gentle nature would not permit him, and the Raja was allowed to continue: "Besides, your mercy to the sinner shows your divine character. What am I but a worldly man, a lump of dirt, while you are purity incarnate? And yet you took me to your pure and sacred bosom! You say Sarvabhauma asked you to come here; but the real reason is that you have sought me out to save me, for, the greater the sinner the greater your mercy towards him."

The Lord replied, smiling: "It is no wonder that the followers of a profound bhakta like you should be themselves bhaktas too. A bhakta purifies his surroundings by his atmosphere. See,

though I am a Sannyasee, your contact has given me too a drop of that sacred feeling!"

Here the Lord alluded to the fact that Sannyasees generally were Adwaitabadees,—believers in anti-bhakti doctrines. A poor Brahmin here intervened and implored the Lord to come to his place for the purpose of breaking his fast. He made this request because Sannyasees are not permitted to accept hospitality from wealthy men, and Raja Ramananda Ray had no right to invite the Lord. Said the Lord, addressing Ramananda: "I would fain hear from your lips discourses about Sree Krishna." Ramananda said in reply: "Since you cannot go without saving me, I give you a warning that I am only a piece of filth, and that it will take you a good many days' trouble to rescue me from the inextricable mire of worldliness in which I feel I am sunk."

Through Ramananda the Lord taught mankind that Krishna-prem is not incompatible with what is called worldly prosperity.

In the evening, Ramananda came to the Lord, dressed as an ordinary man, accompanied by one single servant. The Raja saluted, and the Lord blessed.

The Lord at once came to the point, and asked: "Now tell me, Ramananda, how are men to save themselves?" Now this was a strange question from a stranger, and for a Sannyasee to ask of a man of the world. Ramananda would have preferred listening to speaking; but the request of the Lord deprived him of the privilege of being the listener. Besides, he felt himself as it were compelled to obey. But what would he say, and how to begin? And what a strange question,—how men are to secure salvation! Who is this man? What is his religion? What does he aim at? Ramananda was a bhakta, the stranger was a Sannyasee, which means, generally speaking, a man opposed to bhakti. The Raja pondered, and then replied: "It is not meet that I should give any opinion on a subject like this, in the presence of a saint who can speak with authority."

The Lord repeated the request. He said: "The sole object of my coming to you is to hear from you your views about the salvation of mankind and discourses about Krishna. Don't disappoint me, I implore you."

Ramananda again pondered. Not knowing what the mysterious being before him was aiming at, he thought it prudent to begin from the beginning of the subject. Now, bear the question of the Lord in mind, which was, how are men to secure salvation, *i. e.*, to attain to the supreme object of life. The Raja replied: "Our saints have left behind them definite directions on the subject. A blind man can follow them and reach his goal. Thus the *Vishnu Puran* (the name of a sacred book) says: "Let every one sincerely follow the religion of his fathers, and that will eventually lead him to God."

Here one can see the catholicity of the Hindu mind. "Leave him alone with the religion that he had been taught by his parents and country. But let him perform his religious duties with *sincerity*," says the Hindu. The fact is, the aggressiveness of Christians and Mussulmans follow from want of faith in the religions they profess to follow. A really pious Christian will always be meek and charitable.

The Lord.—Ramananda, please go deeper into the subject.

In the above, Ramananda had taken for granted two propositions, *viz.*, there is a God, and He is to be attained to by bhakti.

Ram.—If this does not please you, I will mention another method of salvation. Let man sincerely follow the principle, "Thy will be done," and he is sure to be saved. It is absolute reliance on God that procures salvation for man. Saying this, he quoted a Shastric text in proof of this principle.

The Lord.—This is superficial, please go deeper.

The manner in which the Lord said this, staggered Ram Ray. What does this strange being aim at?

The Lord considered the principle, suggested by Rama-

nanda, as superficial, because it did not pre-suppose any cordial relationship between God and man. To say that absolute reliance is necessary for the salvation of man, is to convert God, who is a loving partner of the soul, into a despotic and wilful sovereign, fond of exacting submission.

Ram Ray pondered. He said, the man, who, to attain to God, has the courage to forsake the religion of his fathers, is sure of salvation. And he quoted Shastric texts in support of this point also.

A sincere convert makes a very great sacrifice for the purpose of attaining to God. The purport of the Shastric text is that the man whose desire to please God is sufficiently strong so as to lead him to undergo such great sacrifices to obtain Him, as the forsaking of kith and kin, is sure to gain his end, whatever may be the form of his worship.

The Lord again rejected the principle. He said: "Please go deeper; you refer only to a general principle."

Here we see that the Hindu mind is not only catholic, but more. A Brahmin without ardent piety has, according to the Hindu, less chance of salvation than one who accepts Christianity from religious ardour! Let us understand the principle. A Brahmin whose love for a Christian woman seduces him to accept Christianity, does not improve his position by his conversion. But suppose a man is convinced,—let it be erroneously,—that he will best please God if he accepts the new religion which is presented to him, and in his ardour for God, if he then forsakes the religion of his forefathers, God is sure to reward him. This man, even if he accepts an inferior religion, has a better chance of salvation than he who has a more cultured religious faith but no ardour for the attainment of God. It is the longing for God that saves him. This text does away with all forms and creeds.

Ram Ray was in the position of a teacher, detailing to the young Sannyasee the various ways by which men could attain

to God. But, as a matter of fact, he felt himself in the position of a student, passing a severe examination, before an all-powerful, rigid and all-knowing master. Whatever principle he brought forward, was rejected by the Lord as superficial. He thought profoundly as to how to meet the requirements of his strange companion. Said he again :—

"The man who worships God with gyan and bhakti attains to Him," and he again gave a shastric text to prove his principle.

The Lord rejected this also. He said : "Ram Ray, I came to you to see if you could give my thirsty soul a clearer, more elevating and more refreshing drink than what you have hitherto supplied me with. Do please go a little deeper, and oblige me."

Ram Ray thereupon said : "I presume that, though the ordinary principle is to worship God with gyan and bhakti, the higher principle is to destroy this gyan altogether and worship God with pure bhakti, uninfluenced by the former." And again Ram Ray gave his text from the holy books, in support of his theory.

The Lord, when he heard this, expressed, for the first time, some satisfaction. He said, this seems good ; but tell me, what is better.

Now the functions of this gyan (wisdom) and bhakti have been described and analysed by so many different saints, in so many different ways, that though the theories of worshipping by gyan and bhakti jointly, and by pure bhakti without gyan, are readily understood by the higher classes of people of this country, they would, I fear, be somewhat unintelligible to the world in general. I will devote one or two short paragraphs to explain them.

First, "to know" is quite different from "to have." By gyan, we seek to *know* God ; by bhakti we seek to *have* Him. To have Him is better than to know Him ; for, those who have Him, also know Him, at least as far as that is possible for puny men.

But even those who succeed in knowing Him partially or, say, fully, cannot by that means have Him. By gyan we seek to analyse God, and are staggered by the process, and repelled from Him. By bhakti we create an attraction for Him. Ram Ray had said that God ought to be attained by both gyan and bhakti, and the Lord demurred because they are oftentimes contradictory. Gyan oftentimes destroys bhakti, while bhakti nourishes gyan. And when he advocated blind faith, *i. e.* bhakti minus wisdom in regard to God, the Lord approved of the idea partially.

Can the wife of a despot, possessed of indisputable power over her own life, and the lives of his subjects, love her husband with that ardour which a maiden, whose husband is an ordinary being like herself, can afford to feel for her lord? Thus a shepherdess marries a prince whose rank is not known to her, whom she loves devotedly. Suddenly she comes to know that her husband, whom she had come to regard as a part and parcel of her own body, was an irresistibly powerful monarch. Does the information enhance her love or chill it? The likelihood is that, the information, though it may satisfy her vanity or ambition, does no good to her loving heart. A maiden must be made to forget that her lord is an irresistible and wilful despot before she can feel for him what is true love. Thus the gyan (knowledge) which reveals to her the mightiness of her lord, takes away her tender feeling for her Lord. In place of bhakti and love for her husband, she acquires the feelings of awe, admiration and fear.

Take another instance. A subject is so devoted to his sovereign that he is ready to give up his life for him. He does not care to consider whether his master has any blemishes or not. He follows the prince blindly. The king, however, has another subject who is equally loyal. But he is loyal because he knows that it is his duty to be loyal. He is aware that his king has good qualities, and while he knows that he has also what seems to be his bad qualities, he considers it would be

disloyal in him to notice the disagreeable features in the character of his master. He knows too that he serves himself by serving his master and endangers his interest by going against him. The former practises blind bhakti; the latter, gyan and bhakti. Considering the relative position of the two parties, God and the human king,—the former being incomprehensibly great in every respect and the latter actually a puny worm—the best course for the latter is to adopt the course of the blind bhakta. For, man is so puny and God is so great, beyond reach and so omniscient that the man of gyan gains very little by the help of his so-called wisdom.

A man of gyan, on the other hand, is disturbed by such thoughts as these: God created the universe, who created God? We are told He has no beginning, no end, but that is absurd. If He is, He must be too great to care whether men suffer or not. He has His good points, we see; He has given us thirst and drink, hunger and food. This shows him to be considerate. But why are there thunder, pestilence and death? When he sees a tiger seizing a deer, he arrives at the conclusion that God could never be all-merciful. There is no doubt that while He has His good points, He is sometimes cruel too. And why should men live after death? Apparently they do not, for, they are, when dead, either burnt or buried, and eventually, nothing remains of them. Such are the thoughts of the man of wisdom. When man takes upon himself to try to solve problems which are insoluble, because of his own limited capacity, he either brings upon himself atheism, or madness, or at least, indifference. The blind bhakta is convinced that he has no business to meddle with such questions as, "who created God?" that is, questions which are insoluble; and that it is mere a hopeless task to endeavour to "know" Him.

The blind bhakta has other advantages; for, to him are revealed truths which the man of wisdom can never acquire by

his own efforts. The bhakta knows intuitively that God is good, that He is loving, and that in Him he has a final resting-place.

The bhakta, when he thinks of his beloved Lord, is filled with ecstacy ; he feels that he knows as much of the Lord as is necessary for him to know. But the man of wisdom, by seeking to know God, is lost in His immensity and only brings disaster upon himself.

The Lord said to Ram Ray : "Yes, blind bhakti is good, but can't you give me something better ?" Having rejected all the other methods that Ram Ray had mentioned, the Lord accepted the last, though with a proviso.

Now the religious beliefs of the people of India are contained in two Books—the Bhagavat Geeta and the Sreemat Bhagavat. The Geeta is universally accepted as the true guide ; the Sreemat Bhagavat is accepted only by bhaktas. The latter (bhaktas) also revere the Geeta, but they consider the Geeta as only the seed from which the other book, the Sreemat Bhagavat, has sprung. Indeed, where the Geeta ends, the Bhagavat begins. The simple truths which are inculcated in the Bible are put on a philosophical basis in the Geeta, for, the Bible was meant for the general, and the Geeta for the more advanced, public. But the Sreemat Bhagavat is based upon a plane which is much higher. It deals with prem, the love of God.*

The Sreemat Bhagavat begins with what is called blind bhakti, or absolute reliance upon and surrender to God. When, therefore, Ram Ray, after leaving the boundaries of the Geeta, entered

* The Geeta calls God, "Almighty." The Sreemat Bhagavat says : "that is gyan, and you must avoid such thoughts as lead away from Him. For you can never associate with Him until you can come to entertain the feeling that He is like you, and this you will never be able to do, if you go on contemplating His inexpressible and immeasurable grandeur." The Bhagavat says, that those who desire communion with Him, accept only His sweetness and ignore His mightiness.

those of the Sreemat Bhagavat, the Lord, for the first time, expressed some satisfaction. "Yes, blind bhakti is good, but please let me have something deeper, better and purer."

Ram Ray saw that the religion of the Geeta was not the thing to satisfy the cravings of the youthful mendicant before him. So he entered cautiously into the region of the Sreemat Bhagavat. The philosophy of the Bhagavat is that it is only through nature that we can discover the way to God. The sun is the centre of the physical world, and keeps in their appointed orbits its planets with their satellites, by the law of attraction. God is the centre of the spiritual world, to whom men with their dear ones are attracted by love. Men are domestic beings. They form family circles, composed of father, mother, husband, wife, brothers and children. They are enabled to do so because of certain instincts in them which bind them together. These instincts are conjugal love, fraternal love, paternal love and the love of the subordinate for the master. It is these four kinds of attraction which keep men together and bind them into families. Try to develope those four kinds of impulses of the heart, and then try to approach Sree Krishna by following in the wake of the people of Braja. This is worshipping God "domestically," that is to say, by making God Almighty, a member of your own household. But this is the lowest phase: we shall come to the higher phase presently.

When the Lord requested Ram Ray to go deeper, the latter said that the best means of attaining to God was by prem and bhakti, and thus Ram Ray had at last to leave out wisdom (gyan) altogether as a means of attaining to Him.*

* Unless you attribute human faculties to God, a tender relationship between Him and man is impossible. The bhaktas knew that Gauranga was an incarnation of the Lord Almighty, but had they fully realized the fact they would never have associated with him. They could associate with him only when they forgot his divinity, which they often did.

The Lord expressed his satisfaction. "But," said he, "do not please withhold anything from me. Is that the highest form of worship?"

Ram Ray had, by this time, completely lost control over his mind. He felt as if his tongue had been taken entire possession of by the Lord; so he said: "I do not understand all this. It is true, I am speaking and you are listening; but the fact is, you are making me speak only your own sentiments. For, they are all new to me. It seems to me that bhakti is a feeling which is not ethereal enough to lead one to the loving Krishna. Bhakti creates a distant relationship between God and the worshipper; but, as a matter of fact, He is the Soul of our souls nearer and dearer to us than any other thing or being. He should be approached with prem, *i. e.*, love alone.

Here Ram Ray entered into the heart of Brindaban, the region of love, where the central figure is Sree Krishna, the God of love, the Essence of all that is beautiful and good. Said he: "God ought to be attained by the love which a devoted servant bears to his master or a dutiful child to his parents."

"But is that the highest kind of love?" asked the Lord.

Ram Ray pondered. He said: "No. The higher kind of love is the fraternal,—the love that a brother bears to a brother, or that a friend feels for a friend. The higher form of worship is to approach God with fraternal love and regard Him as a friend, as Balaram regarded Sree Krishna."

The Lord expressed his delight. "But tell me," said he, "is there any feeling which influences the human heart more powerfully than fraternal love?"

Ram Ray said: "Yes. It is the feeling which a parent bears for his children. God should be worshipped with the love which Nanda and Yasada bore for Sree Krishna."

The Lord smiled and said: "Have you gone to the bottom of the matter or have you any deeper secret to reveal to me?"

Said Ram Ray: "I have no secrets to reveal. The secrets are your own, which you are revealing through me for the benifit of mankind, whose saviour you, no doubt, are. I think, however, conjugal love is the strongest feeling in the heart and God Almighty should be worshipped thus. The Lord God should be loved as Rukshminee and the other wives of Sree Krishna loved Him."

The Lord said: "This is, no doubt, the highest form of worship of those mentioned so far, but can you tell me of a higher still?"

Ram Ray said: "Yes, there is a higher. Let Sree Krishna be approached with a love which a woman, infatuated by love for a gallant, feels." He quoted a sloka from the Sreemat Bhagavat in proof of this statement. And then he explained himself thus: "The feeling which a woman feels for her husband is not love; for, her feeling is based upon self. She loves her husband because he is her property. But the feelings of a woman for her lover are much more strong. For him she forsakes everything, though she is not sure of him, and undergoes the risk, of being cast off any day. She knows that she has no claims upon her lover; she does not care to see whether her lover is worthy or not; she follows him because she cannot help it. To worship Sree Krishna with such ardent love is to attain to the highest condition which a devotee can reach."

The Lord was so delighted that he had no words to express his obligation. "But"—here the Lord hesitated to add any further protests. He, however, finished the sentence he had begun, though with some effort. "But, Ram Rai, excuse me, have you anything higher to explain to me? You see your words are like nectar, and they intoxicate me with delight."

Ram Ray smiled. He said he was not aware that there was any being in the wor'd who would ask for mysteries deeper than those already revealed. The feeling of a man or woman for his

or her lover is the strongest that exercises the mind of the human being. "Yet I think", said Ram Ray, "there is a higher, which is—Radha's love for Sree Krishna!"

"Explain then what it is", asked the Lord, his countenance beaming with delight.

Said Ram Ray: "The love that Radha bore for Sree Krishna has no parallel in this world. Sree Krishna is pure, Radha is purity itself, and there is no dross in the love. It is love which enables Radha to sacrifice everything that man holds dear, and brave even social scandal for the sake of Krishna. Her happiness consists in the happiness of Krishna. She cannot live without Krishna. Yet she does not want anything from Him. When at the point of death, it is the name of Krishna which revives her. When her attendants proposed to bring Sree Krishna from Mathura, where he flourished as a King, Radha demurred. She said: "Let Him enjoy the happy life of a King. Why should you bring Him back to the forest of Brindaban? Of course, my heart yearns to see Him, but it would be selfish of me to remove Him from His golden throne, and make Him live with me in this wilderness." When her attendant ladies proposed that they should go to Mathura and bring Him home a captive, Radha shuddered. Said Radha: "There is no glory in making Him a captive. Everyone with bhakti and prem can do so. I regret to see everyone trying to make Sree Krishna a serving friend. But let not the world say Radha is among them. I captivate Him! Is He not my beloved? Is He not mine for ever and ever?" And said she again: "I want to bring Him back here; but not for my own happiness. He is there in the midst of strangers, hollow friends, and selfish subjects. He cannot possibly ever be happy there. I know His guileless heart, nothing but pure love pleases Him. And therefore I wish Him back amongst his sincere friends."

"Go on, go on," says the Lord, as if any interruption on the

par of Ram Ray was misery to him. "Go on," says he, "your words delight me to ecstacy."

But Ram Ray had not much further to say, which he acknowledged. He said : "The human intellect cannot go beyond this. I am, however, repeating like a parrot what you, by taking possession of my mind, are making me say. You have to-day revealed to the world, through me, holy things, not known even to celestial beings. Yet I recollect just now, I had the audacity of composing a song, describing the condition of Radha. I do not know whether it will be agreeable to you or not." And Ram Ray then sang it.

It is beyond my powers to furnish a translation of a song like that, composed by Ram Ray, for the ears of the Lord! It means this, however. Radha tells her principal attendant to go to Krishna and remind Him how their love (*i. e.*, love between Radha and Krishna) grew. "Remind him of it," says Radha to her attendant, "if He has forgotten it. At first we saw each other, and the result was immediate love. This love began to increase and is increasing still, and I do not know where it will end. People say that men and women fall in love with each other. But my condition was different. For, I had no knowledge that he was a man and I a woman; indeed, I had no knowledge that there was such a thing as difference of sex. I, therefore, cannot account for my love to Krishna, etc., etc."

But the reader may ask, is such a love possible at all for man, and more especially for man to feel towards God? That question occurred to the hard and atheistical thinker Sarvabhauma. He had read and heard of Radha's love for Krishna. He had frequent discussions with Ram Ray about it. The result was that the aggressive intellectual giant non-plussed his unaggressive antagonist by his sallies. Sarvabhauma always silenced Ramananda by the observation that Radha's love for Krishna was a fiction, created by poets, and that it was altogether

impossible for men to feel any love for God, much less anything like the love which Radha was supposed to have felt for Krishna. But he saw the Lord and also his great love for Krishna. And though the first sight of the Lord in his ecstatic fit almost paralysed the savant, he could not help recollecting what he had so often said to Ramananda. He muttered the admission to himself with wonder, that it was after all true that not only could a man love God, but that he could love Him in the manner Radha was alleged to have loved Him. And the philosopher arrived at the conclusion that, since it was possible for man to feel so much love for God, there was no doubt that there was a God, and that He deserved to be loved!

The love which Lord Gauranga showed for God has no parallel either amongst human beings, or saints, or Messiahs. No man or woman had ever loved his or her lover in the way Lord Gauranga loved God. Messiahs have preached love to God, but Lord Gauranga alone preached it, not only by words, but in practice.

The highest form of worship is thus to love God as Radha did. But man cannot do it, and, therefore, the devotee has to follow in the *wake* of Radha. Let him contemplate the love that Radha felt for Krishna, and by that he will be able to acquire the feeling step by step. The sceptical may say that he has no faith in the existence of Radha. But it was to bear witness to Radha and her love for Krishna that Gauranga came down upon this earth. Those who have no faith in Radha will get all they need by substituting Gauranga for Radha, *i. e.*, by contemplating Gauranga's love for Krishna.

Ram Ray gazed at the Lord intently, until he felt that he had at last divined who the Lord was. So he fell at his feet, and with great earnestness inquired whether or not it was the fact that He was the Krishna and Radha, of whom he had been made to talk like a parrot? The Lord would have entered a protest, but

Ram Ray intervened. He said: "My Lord, you came of your own accord to seek me out, and it is not meet that you should now conceal yourself from me." Ram Ray got no reply, but on raising his head he discovered that the Lord had disappeared and that Radha and Krishna were standing in his place!

Ram Ray fainted away!

The Lord remained several days in the town of Vidyanagar. He told Ram Ray that he was proceeding to the south, that he would meet him when coming back, and that he should prepare himself to accompany him to Puri. "What a pleasure it will be for us," said the Lord, "to pass our days in converse about God."

So Ram Ray was asked to give up his kingdom for the pleasure of talking about God with the Lord! Was not this a strange request? But Ram Ray did not think it so, neither did the Lord, when he proposed it! And I hope my readers do not take a different view. Sarvabhauma saw a six-handed divinity, because he wanted faith. Ram Ray saw Radha-Krishna, because he had faith already.

CHAPTER XIV.

SOUTH UNMOLESTED.

My original intention was to stop here. But I am irresistibly impelled to lead the Lord back to Nadia to meet his friends once more. In accordance with his vows as a Sannyasee he was bound to pay a last visit to his native town. This the Lord could not do until five years after the date of his renunciation. It would probably take two big volumes to relate the leelas that he performed during these five years. I will, however, give a running account, noticing only a few salient features of his labours during this period.

For two years the Lord travelled in the south. The south had not been molested by Mussulman conquerors; so the provinces in that part of India enjoyed prosperity and peace. The inhabitants lived there, as the Hindus have been accustomed to do from time immemorial, in the culture of their intellect and religion. The people had very little idea of war, much less of politics. The higher classes studied and cultivated their spiritual nature, the merchants were engaged in trade and commerce, and the lower class tilled the land.

In the south the Lord travelled rapidly, as a rule, though sometimes he halted in places where he had particular objects to serve. He came across leading Buddhists and Adwaitabadees, and also leaders of innumerable other faiths. Whenever he came across such a leader, he invariably appropriated him.

Tyrants oppressing their subjects, or robber-chiefs making themselves disagreeable to their neighbours, were awakened by him to their fallen condition and made useful members of society, and sometimes converted even into saints.

There is variety everywhere in this universe—there is variety in the modes of conversions too, at least there was in those adopted by the Lord. The Kazi was converted in one way, Sarvabhauma was subjugated in another way, and the washerman in still another way.

I have already referred to the wonderful spiritual energy displayed by the Lord in saving the south.

The Lord displayed a still more wonderful power in selecting his instruments for the spread of the faith. Sometimes he sought them out, though he had never seen them before. Sometimes he went out of his way for this purpose; sometimes these appointed men were irresistibly impelled to come to him to be blessed.

From Vidyanagar the Lord proceeded to Trimand, where he converted the learned Buddhistic leader and Bhikhuram Giri. At Tungabhadra he converted the proud savant Dhundiram, on whom he conferred the name of Haridas, or 'servant of God.' From there the Lord proceeded to Akshaya-bat, and there a wealthy merchant, Thirtharam, attempted to test his credentials, by setting upon him two women of bad character. All the three, together with the wife of the merchant, Kamal-kumaree, were in return mercifully saved by the Lord!

The Lord then entered and crossed a jungle, twenty miles in extent, and arrived at the town of Moonna. In this town, he danced in a wonderful manner in the midst of thousands, and deluged the crowd with the holy spirit. From there he proceeded to Venkat. Here the Lord converted a terrible robber-chief of Boogla with all his followers.

The Lord had to fast for three days and nights and had some milk on the fourth day.

In the sacred shrine of Siva at Girishwar, he came across a Sannyasee who had vowed eternal silence and who was in a state of *samadhi*. The Lord awakened him from this state of trance and conferred prem on him. We then find the Lord in the town of Tripadi. There a savant, by name Mathura, came to the Lord to hold a polemical discussion with him, but the sight of Gauranga threw him into a convulsion and converted him.

From there the Lord reached the sacred shrine of Pana-Narasinha, and from there he proceeded to Bishnu-Kanchi. The Lord, after visiting several sacred shrines on the way, at last arrived at the shrine of Sandi. There he converted a celebrated Adwaitabadee Sannyasee, by name Sadananda Puri.

The Lord from there proceeded to the town of Chaipalli, and from there to Tanjore. On the hills of Chandalu he found a congregation of Sannyasees who resided there. He converted the leader, by name Sureshwar. The Lord next arrived at the shrine of Puddacot, and there he danced with little boys and girls. He always loved little boys and girls, and he attracted them to him in an unaccountable manner. At this unique dance there was a shower of flowers, which all the spectators saw, and of course, were filled with delight and wonder. Here an old blind Brahmin fell at the feet of the Lord. The Lord blessed him, whereupon his eye-sight was immediately restored to him. The Brahmin gazed at the Lord with infinite tenderness and and then fell down—dead! The Lord himself helped in his interment.

The Lord then came to the town of Tripatra, and there he conferred prem upon the celebrated philosopher Bharga Deva. Here he remained for seven days in the company of this fortunate man. After this, the Lord entered a jungle, and it took him fifteen days to cross it.

Our Master at last reached Cape Comorin, after having conferred prem upon several celebrated Sannyasees on the way.

From the Cape, the Lord returning entered the State of Travancore. The fame of the Lord always preceded him. Indeed, his follower Govinda, to whom we are indebted for much of the present account, says that in many places they found the rumour, that Sree Krishna had appeared on earth and was roaming about as a Sannyasee, had reached before them. Of course, most people, when they saw the Lord, came to recognise that he was more than human; but a large number went further than that. The very sight of the Lord convinced them that he was no other than Sree Krishna Himself.

The then Rajah of Travancore, hearing that a wonderful Sannyasee had arrived, felt a great desire to see him. He sent men to fetch the Lord, but to no purpose. The king, therefore, went forth to see the Lord, and found him sitting, leaning against a tree with eyes shut, while torrents of tears of joy were trickling down his cheeks. The Lord blessed the Rajah and left the place, though his Majesty tried his best to persuade him to live within his dominion.

The hill of Ramgiri, where the Lord proceeded after leaving Travancore, was also a place where Sannyasees congregated and lived. The Lord proceeded there with the object of blessing these pantheistical saints. He conferred prem on them, and gave them a new birth.

The Lord then passed through the shrine of Matsya Nag Panchapadi, Chitol, and arrived at the bank of the river Toonga-bhadra. In the town of Chandapur the Lord converted another celebrated Sannyasee, named Ishwar Bharati. Then the Lord entered a jungle, full of ferocious beasts. Govinda in his book frankly confesses that, though in the company of the Lord himself, yet fear overcame him now and then when he saw tigers, lions, elephants, rhinos trooping, most of them at night, often approaching them as if to smell their bodies. Says Govinda: "As the animals approached me, I approached the

Lord nearer and nearer." Possibly the animals had an eye upon Govinda, but certainly they had no unworthy feeling against the Lord, who loved them so dearly,—elephants and ants alike.

In this manner, the Lord at last reached the town of Gurjari. In that town, the Lord danced and distributed prem to thousands. The Lord at last entered the celebrated town of Poona. That Brahminical place, undisturbed by Mussulman invasion, resembled Nadia very much. The town was full of educational institutions.

The Lord was sitting on the bank of a lake called Tacchar, weeping, as usual, for Krishna, in these words: "Where art Thou gone, my Krishna, leaving my heart desolate? Oh! my Lord, I cannot live without Thee. Without Thee all is dreary around me." The Lord wept in this way and thousands watched him, profoundly affected by his pathetic voice and undoubted misery. One mischievous man, either from fun or pure thoughtlessness, suggested that Krishna, for whom he was weeping, was to be found in the lake. The Lord heard this and threw himself headlong into the vast reservoir of water, and, as he had swooned away before he had taken the jump, he did not rise! There was the utmost consternation, and hundreds jumped after him to bring him back to life.

From there the Lord proceeded to the shrine of Bholeswar, and from there to Devaleswar. The Lord then proceeded to the shrine of Khandwa. Here girls, who could not be married, were dedicated to the deity and called "Murarees." These girls, espoused to God and maintained by the Temple, lived an extremely loose life. In the Lord, a young man of twenty-six, they found a fit object of attention. But the Lord expressed such profound pity and concern for their state, that their hearts were at once softened. They had been falsely assured by those who had led them to their fall, that as brides of Heaven, they were privileged to abandon virtue. Exter-

nally they lived a gay life, but, at heart they were the most miserable of women. At the beginning they repented of their fall, but, day by day, became hardened, till, at length, they resolved themselves into vicious creatures, almost without souls. The Lord saw them and wept, and wept so sincerely for their fallen condition, that they were awakened to a sense of their shame. They now recovered the faculty they had lost, as they thought, for ever, of shedding tears! And they fell in a body at the feet of the Lord with the bitter cry of "Save us, Father, Saviour of mankind!"

The Lord told them that they were fortunate in having the Lord God for their husband, but they ought to be faithful to Him, even more scrupulously faithful than to their earthly husbands had they married such. These "Murarees," in a body, became so saintly in their character that they purified the quarter in which they lived. The Lord then entered the jungle of Choranandee, with a view to pay a visit to the celebrated Bhil robber-chief, Naoroji.

When the Lord was seen proceeding to the haunt of the robber-chief, people besought him to forbear. They assured the Lord that though he had no property with him, yet the chief was cruel, and oftentimes committed murder from pure love of bloodshed. But the Lord did not pay any heed to their counsel, and actually entered the stronghold of the chief, where he sat leaning against a tree. The robber-chief heard of his arrival, and sent some of his men to fetch the stranger before him; but they failed. They tried to make the Lord listen to their request to accompany them to their chief; but the Lord was engrossed with his Krishna, and had no ears for either their threats or their entreaties. The robbers would have used force under ordinary circumstance; but the magnetism of the Lord restrained them, and they dared not touch his person. The robber-chief, thereupon, appeared on the scene, not in the best of tempers. He came with his sword drawn. But the sight

of the Lord staggered him. Still he angrily wanted to know what business might a so-called holy man have in a retreat of robbers?

The Lord raised his head and looked at him tenderly, with eyes full of love,—a love which is boundless. The gaze, the like of which he had never seen before, made the chief yet more uneasy. After gazing at the robber-chief for sometime in this manner, the Lord replied: "You call yourself a robber, but I see in you great bhakti for the Lord."

Now such a remark ought naturally to have been taken by the robber-chief as a piece of sarcasm. But the look of the Lord confounded him. It betokened such simplicity, gentleness and love, that his rising anger subsided, and he was led to reply in a more gentle way. He said: "You tell me I have bhakti for the Lord, but I am a robber. Pray, explain yourself." The Lord in reply said: "You may be robber by profession, but I see in your heart a lump of bhakti which any man might covet."

The robber.—Are you sincere in what you say?

The Lord.—Quite sincere.

The robber had no idea that there was any good in him. The idea that he had yet in him a particle of what is good, created a sudden revolution in his mind.

The robber.—Do you mean to say that if I now give up my evil practices and surrender unconditionally at the feet of the Lord, He will accept me?

The Lord.—Certainly.

The robber had had no hope, but he could not doubt what he was now told. The words of the Lord carried conviction.

The robber (more to himself than to the Lord).—I am already sixty, and have neither children, nor wife, nor relative to provide for. Day by day death's appointed hour is approaching. What a fool I have been!

Tears came down his cheek. It then seemed to him that the holy man, sitting before him, was attracting to him his very soul. A little while after, he threw away his sword and addressed his followers in these words : "I can no longer lead you ; you must choose another chief or break up the band ; for, I have resolved to follow this holy man."

The Lord rose to depart, and Naoroji followed him. The Lord objected to this, and Naoroji stopped. "Yes, I see, I have my chieftain's garb on," said Naoroji. And saying this he tore his clothes into shreds, and, in their stead, wrapped a rag round his loins.

"Now, my Lord, will you permit me to follow you ?" said he. The Lord said nothing. And Naoroji became his constant companion.

The Lord paid a visit to the celebrated shrine of Pandupur or Pandharpur. Here he heard of the disappearance of his elder brother Bishwarup, at the age of eighteen, an account of which has already been given. Here, moreover, Tukaram, who had convulsed the Maharatta country, was converted either by the Lord himself or one of his instruments whom he left behind.

The Lord then proceeded to pay a visit to the shrine of Khandwa on the bank of the Mula. From there the Lord proceeded to the city of Nassick, and from Nassick to Panchabati.

From Panchabati he reached the town of Daman, and from Daman to Surat. Here he stopped the practice of animal sacrifice to the goddess Ashtabhuja. From Surat the Lord proceeded to Broach, and from Broach to Baroda. The king, as a matter of course, came to pay him a visit. Here Naoroji, the lucky robber-chief, died in the lap of the Lord, the Master breathing sweet words of comfort and consolation in his ears. The Lord himself assisted in his interment. The last moments of the robber-chief were inexpressively pathetic and soul-ennobling.

From Baroda the Lord proceeded to Ahmedabad, and from

Ahmedabad to Ghoga. In the last place he encountered a celebrated dancing-girl and wealthy prostitute, by name Baromukhee. Still in the prime of youth, her beauty was something supernatural. The Lord sat before her window, and as might be expected, an ever-increasing crowd surrounded him, and the Master, in the excess of his joy, was at length led to dance in their midst. The fallen woman observed everything from her window, and the sight awakened her to a sense of her condition. She made over all her property to her favourite maid, and surrendered herself unconditionally at the feet of the Lord. He blessed her, and she was seized by an over-powering penitence for the sins of her ill-used life. The Lord advised her to pass the rest of her days in devotion. She then disfigured herself by cutting her magnificent hair short, and wearing a piece of coarse cloth. She entered a hut and lived there in prayer; in short, the Lord left her a saint.

The Lord passed through Jafferabad and entered Somnath. This wealthy shrine had been looted by the Mussulmans.* From Somnath the Lord entered Junagarh, and in its vicinity came in contact with a celebrated Sannyasee, Bharga Deva, who was suffering from an incurable disease. The Lord healed him at once and then conferred upon him prem and bhakti. This man and all his disciples clung to the Lord and refused to part from him. The Lord was then followed by sixteen persons. With all these he entered a deep jungle, which took him seven days to cross, living entirely upon wild fruits, and then reached the celebrated shrine of Pravas.

From Pravas the Lord arrived at Dwarka, where he remained a fortnight. From there he turned to Baroda, and thence proceeded direct towards Vidyanagar, the town where Ramananda Ray ruled.

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* The gate of this celebrated Temple was carried to Afghanistan by the conquering hordes. It was subsequently brought back to India by the British Government.

The rumour, as I said before, that Sree Krishna was coming, always preceded the Lord, during his travels in the south. Govinda says that in many places he saw, with astonishment, that the people were expecting them—himself and Sree Krishna! Whenever the Lord stopped, he was surrounded by crowds, and whenever he left a place, the people clung to him, refusing to go home. But the Master, somehow or other, succeeded in evading their company.

I said before that the Lord knew his men and selected his instruments. Of course, the Lord never told his plans to anybody; but, it seemed, the Lord had a definite object in selecting particular men for his favours. There are men who are not only worthy of receiving bhakti and prem, but also of imparting them to others. Such men the Lord selected, in his travels, for special favours. He knew of the existence of those men beforehand, and sometimes he sought them out, while, at other times, they came, of their own accord, to the Lord to be blessed. A man who had thus been blessed, remained on the spot to distribute prem and bhakti all around him. It was thus, prem and bhakti were distributed in the south, in such a thorough and speedy manner.

Now, it must be borne in mind, that the Lord never proclaimed himself. His object was not only to teach, but also impart prem and bhakti for Sree Krishna to mankind. What he aimed at was to make people love Sree Krishna, and not himself. That was the faith he preached to, and instilled in the minds of, men. Thus, in the south, even some of his intimate disciples failed to know what name he had assumed, where he came from, and where he was going to. Of course, where the Lord happened to stop for some little time, the people learnt many things about him from his follower Govinda.

In many places in the south the tradition still exists that several hundred years ago Sree Krishna had wandered there in

the guise of a beautiful and charming youth. Shades wherein he had sat, ghats at which he had bathed, are even now considered sacred and are pointed out to the inquirer, as places which were sanctified by the presence of Sree Krishna in human form.

Whether Tukaram, the saint of Poona, was a direct disciple of the Lord, or was the disciple of a disciple of his, it were needless to determine. The Lord passed through Pandharpur, the place of Tukaram. The religion which Tukaram preached was the religion of the Lord Gauranga in every particular, that which his disciples preached to the masses. The followers of that saint call themselves "belonging to Chaitanya." And Tukaram himself gives on account of his conversion in this manner. He says that he was going to the river to bathe, where he was accosted by a holy man who touched his head. Tuka fancied that he called himself Keshava Chaitanya. "I then," he writes, "sank into an unconscious state, and, therefore, cannot give an exact account of what happened. On coming back to consciousness I found that he who had blessed me, had disappeared."

Now this was just the manner in which the Lord oftentimes made his conversions. A look or a touch from him throws the man into a trance, and, on his coming to consciousness, he finds himself alone, having only a faint remembrance of having come across a celestial being or a holy man, who had caused the revolution in his mind, *viz.*, an irresistible attraction for God or Sree Krishna. This touch, from the Lord, not only filled the fortunate individual with prem and bhakti, but the main principles of Vaishnava philosophy! Tukaram converted a large number of men in the Deccan, and he has a large following there.

In the same manner, following the advent of the Lord in the province, a saint arose in Guzerat, to whom the highest regard is paid by people of that region and others conversant with his life and labour. This was Swamee Narayan. He taught

both by precept and example the cardinal doctrine preached by Lord Gauranga, namely, that, "in order to be fit to utter the name of Krishna, one must be meaner than grass, and honour those who insult him," and carried the doctrine to such lengths, that when his opponents flung their shoes at him, he handed the shoes back to their owners! Ballavacharya whose name and fame are so unpopular in the Bombay Presidency, had always been a man of saintly character. It was his disciples that prostituted Vaishnavism, not he. In his old age he proceeded to Neelachal to have an encounter with the Lord. The usual result happened. He fell at the feet of the Lord, and was eventually initiated by Gadadhar, the beloved disciple of the Lord.

The Lord always loved children. Men or women were awe-struck in his presence, and doubted lest by coming too near him they should commit an offence; but children had no such feelings to restrain them. They found a pleasure in flocking round him. Never was the Lord more happy than when in the company of children. Govinda describes how at one place in the south, a boy induced his play-fellows to approach the Lord and promised them some fun for their pains. A Sannyasee has come here, he assured them, who is a mad man, and who can be made to perform strange antics by merely uttering in his hearing the name of Hari. Quite a crowd of boys surrounded the Lord. "Say Hari," cried the leader, "and you will see the fun." And they all said, "Hari," "Hari," and clapped their hands. The Lord, on hearing the sweet Harinam, turned round, saw the boys, and smiled. "See! already the man is moved, let us repeat it," said the leader. And again they utter the sacred name accompanied by the clapping of hands.

The Lord who was in his ordinary state, understood the motive of the children, namely, that he might be driven to display his madness. So, to humour them, he sat there and began to besmear his body with dust, all the while by his sweet smile

encouraging the children to go on repeating the name. "Now," says the leader triumphantly: "He has gone stark mad! See how he is besmearing his body with dust," and they laughed and danced.

When the Lord arrived at the town of Ramananda, he was received with royal honours. "We will now return to Puri," said the Lord to Rajah Ramananda, "where we shall live happily together, and pass our days discoursing about Krishna." Ram Ray said: "Immediately after you left me, I wrote to the king to relieve me of my duties. He refused. I again and again wrote to him, and, at last, confessed to him that you had called me and I must obey. The king has heard of you from Sarvabhauma, and he is anxiously expecting you back to Neelachal. When the king heard your name, he gave me leave to resign my duties. But you and I must not go together, as I must take with me an escort of soldiers, etc. I will wait, my Lord, till you have gone, and soon afterwards follow you."

CHAPTER XV.

THE KING.

THE Lord arrived at Neelachal (Puri) after an absence of two years. The bhaktas, who had been all the while anxiously waiting there, advanced in a body, and met him while he was yet about a day's journey from the Temple of Jagannath. They met, and the Lord embraced them. Sarvabhauma followed them with a numerous retinue and fell at the feet of the Lord, who raised him to give a warm embrace.

The Lord then settled in the Town of Puri and lived in a hut near the Temple. All the important servants of Jagannath came to meet him for the first time. Bhaktas from all parts of the country flocked to him, for, his fame had then spread throughout India. Thus came Puri, Bharati, Swarup-Damodar and other celebrated Sannyasees to cling to him for ever. Ramananda also came to pass all his days in the company of the Lord.

The king of Orissa had come to believe that the Lord was Sree Krishna: the conversion of Sarvabhauma and Ramananda had convinced him of this fact. Both these devoted followers besought the Lord to grant the king an interview. But the Lord refused!

He had excellent grounds for this refusal, however. A Sannyasee is not only prohibited from willingly coming across a female, but also a king. The Lord, therefore, could not, under the rules, allow the king an interview. The Lord had,

no doubt, other excellent motives to take that step. He had forsaken society and become a poor mendicant, with a view to lead mankind to accept Harinam. If a king now comes to acknowledge him as master,—the king in whose town he lives,—the pathos that his resignation evoked, would then evaporate partially. The Lord wanted to remain the poorest of the poor, so as to touch the heart of mankind by his own mode of living.

Both Sarvabhauma and Ramananda then urged that the king would not come as a sovereign prince, but as one of the servants of Jagannath; for, as I said before, he was a regular servant of God, his duty being to sweep the streets before the Temple with a golden broom. But the Lord refused. Sarvabhauma and Ramananda next tried to move the Lord in other ways. They told him that the king had given up everything; that he was day and night weeping for a sight of his lotus feet; and that if he was not allowed the privilege of a sight of his feet, the probabilities were that he would die of grief. The king, Pratap, had also composed a sloka in which he addressed the Lord in these words: "When, my Lord God, Thou tookest the resolution of coming down to save sinners, didst Thou make an exception only in the case of the greatest of them, Pratap-rudra?"

The Lord was, no doubt, moved; and though extremely kind in his refusal, he yet refused an audience to the king. It seems, this refusal of the Lord had an excellent effect upon the heart of the king. As a despotic ruler, he had, no doubt, some idea in his mind that he had his special privileges. But the attitude of the Lord humbled him to the dust; at the same time, it whetted his appetite for his lotus feet. And thus the king complained to Sarvabhauma: "The Lord is merciful, he has already taught me one great truth. A man, whom I would not allow to sit before me or approach me, is the constant companion of the Lord. But, I, the king of kings, have not the privilege of even seeing his lotus

feet! This shows how unfortunate we kings are, and really how low we are."

Just see how the king was humiliated, purged out of his impurities, and chastened. He had the lives of Sarvabhauma and Ramananda at his absolute disposal. They were his servants, and them he had to employ to plead for him to their friend, the Lord! And thus the Lord, the friend of his servants, refused to see him, their master, the king!

The fact, however, is that nothing is impossible for a sincere devotee; if he is persistent in his knocking, the door is sure to be opened unto him. The king knocked and knocked, and got his reward at last One day, while the Lord was in a state of trance, the king, following the advice of Ramananda, approached him in the dress of an ordinary man. He sat, took the lotus feet of the Lord in his lap and began to rub them gently, all the while repeating some beautiful slokas from the Srimat Bhagavat, describing Sree Krishna. The Lord was in his half-conscious state, so as to be able to understand the slokas. Their recitation threw him into raptures, and at last he was led, by his ecstacy, to rise with a *hunkar* and clasp the king in his breast. As he embraced the king, he said: "Who art thou, kind stranger, pouring nectar into my ears? As a Sannyasee, I have nothing to give; so accept my embrace."

The Lord and the king fell down in a death-like swoon, clasped in each other's arms!

The king regained his consciousness before the Lord had done it, and left the place, tottering in his gait like a drunken man. Before he left, he humbly saluted the bhaktas that surrounded the Lord, who, all of them, blessed him, and congratulated him on his good luck.

The king proclaimed to his friends after this that though the Lord was known by different names, he should know him by one name only, which is "The saviour of Pratap-rudra."

The bhaktas lost no time in sending to Nadia the news of the arrival of the Lord back from his travels in the south. They in Nadia had heard that he had proceeded, almost alone, to the south, leaving Nitai and others in Neelachal. I will not attempt a description as to how Shachee, Vishnupriya and the bhaktas of the Lord passed this dreary couple of years, when they had no knowledge of the whereabouts of the dearest object of their lives. Says Bashu Ghose, describing the state of Nadia during this period of universal sorrow and despair: "The heart weeps, because of the absence of the Lord. What are we to do, where are we to go, to have him again? Who will now shower his mercy upon the fallen? Who will now cry outright at the sight of a fallen man? Nadia has become dark and dreary, and sinful Bashu Ghose has to suffer all this."

It is on record that Shachee, Vishnupriya and the most ardent bhaktas of the Lord lived, because he appeared to them in their heart, and consoled them by his spiritual presence. When they were, however, in a state of utter despair, tidings came, to restore them to life, of the arrival of the Lord.

In a short time, the house of Shachee was filled with bhaktas from all parts of the country, who assembled there for the purpose of a deliberation. "To Neelachal," "to Neelachal," they all cried; and they all, after taking permission of Shachee, prepared to proceed to that Town to see the Lord. Hundreds, thus led by Adwaita and Sreebas, proceeded on foot, and in three or four weeks' time, after suffering indescribable hardships, at last reached Neelachal. The Lord and bhaktas met after an absence of more than two years.

I wish I had the power and space of describing this beautiful scene,—the meeting of the Lord with his hundreds of bhaktas, who loved him more than their lives. Haridas, originally a Mussulman, had no permission to enter the province of Orissa; but

now the king was a slave of the Lord, and Haridas, a bhakta, had no fear to go to his master.

The Lord and bhaktas sat, gazing at each other tenderly. "Where is Murari?" says the Lord; and some one ran to fetch him. He had fallen down in a swoon close by the hut of the Lord, from excess of his emotion, and, therefore, was left behind by his companions, who were beside themselves with joy. The Lord rose to embrace Murari, and he drew back, imploring the master not to touch him. "I am only dirt," said he, "don't touch a poor sinner like me. I am not worthy of that blessing." But the Lord embraced him by force, exclaiming that he touched Murari only to purify himself.

The bhaktas stayed four months with the Lord. I have no space to describe how they passed these days in ecstacy. The Lord persuaded the bhaktas to go back home, as they were not ascetics, but householders. "You must perform the duties of householders and maintain those who are dependent on you," said the Lord; and they had to come back with great reluctance. They had forgotten wife, children, nay, the external world, in the company of the Lord.

Nitai and many other ascetic bhaktas remained with the Lord. The whole of Orissa had then been converted, and it was the lot of Puri to enjoy the ecstacy which Nadia had enjoyed two years before. The Lord sat with Nitai for a private conference.

The Lord.—You must go to Bengal.

Nitai.—I go to Bengal? I to leave you? Never! The body cannot live without the soul, and you are my soul.

The Lord.—Bengal must be saved. You alone are capable of accomplishing the difficult feat. You love me and therefore don't choose to leave this place. But we are not in this world to please ourselves. The people are groaning under misery, because of their unbelief. Our hardest work lies in Bengal, where the leaders are learned and profoundly intellect-

ual. Only a powerful man like you can succeed in a place like that.*

Nitai began to weep. "It breaks my heart to leave you," said he. The Lord embraced him and said with inexpressible tenderness: "When you suffer in my absence, remember that I too am suffering for you." The Lord continued: "Learned men as they are in Bengal, they are not so easily conquered by any display of intellectual powers as by the display of the higher emotions. You are all-joy; show them what a delight it is to serve Krishna. Appeal to their heart and show that there is something else in man besides his intellect. I have the profoundest pity for these learned and intellectual men; kindly take the most particular care of them. In short, oblige me, dear brother, by making no exception between high and low, wise and ignorant, pious and infidel, good and bad, in dispensing your blessings,—save them all without discrimination. Greater the sinner, the greater are his claims upon you. You will encounter much opposition, but you will have to overcome it,—by love."

Nitai was thus sent to Bengal with a dozen followers. The Lord, when dismissing this "expedition," filled the members composing it, with so much of holy spirit as to lead them utterly to forget themselves. They came all the way to Nadia in a state of unconsciousness, not remembering anything what they had done all the three or four weeks.

In Bengal, Nitai raised the Flag of Lord Gauranga again. Nitai's method of conversion was unique. He never preached or argued, neither distributed pamphlets nor letters. But he roamed from place to place, proclaiming the advent of the Lord, with hundreds of followers, showing himself and his companions to be men who were constantly intoxicated with joy. He proceeded with his followers, dancing and doing kirtan.

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* It must be borne in mind that the Lord subsequently, in this manner, apport oned Northern India to his disciples, for the spread of the faith.

As a specimen, we give here one of his songs: "He is come, He is come. He, the Being, who sits in our heart. He has come to take you to Goloke (highest heaven). Come to the port of my Lord Gauranga; and I shall have you ferried over the ocean of worldliness without any payment."

Of course, he looked and talked like a mad man. But his joy was unmistakeable. That joy overflowed his heart and overtook and drowned others; and thus while Nitai proceeded on his tour of conquests, he found himself followed by an ever-increasing crowd of believers.

There were men who confronted Nitai, who wanted proofs, who voted him and his followers mad men. And there were others who actually acted towards him in a spirit of bitter hostility. But the ardour of Nitai was not to be damped by these trifles. He would fall at the feet of his deadliest opponent and implore him, with such earnestness, weeping all the while, expressing the deep anguish of his soul, that his unfortunate victim would find himself moved in spite of himself and acknowledge defeat. Thus the greatest opponents of Nitai became subsequently his most ardent followers. Here is a description of Nitai from one of his most favoured disciples, the author of "Chaitanya Bhagabat."

"Nitai, whose temper is never ruffled by anger, and who is always under the influence of a never-failing ecstacy, roams about in the town without a drop of pride in him. Whoever comes across him, he accosts him earnestly to accept Gauranga. If the man refuses, he takes a bit of grass between his lips (a sign of abject submission), and says, 'purchase me for ever by accepting the Lord.' Nitai never selects his men; on the other hand, the greater the sinner, the greater is his compassion for him. Whenever he sees a sinner, he rolls on the ground in the anguish of his soul."

Nitai's advent was followed by a convulsion in Bengal. A

strange frenzy seized the people. Many of them acquired something like supernatural powers,—children were found to talk like wise men, men to speak in strange tongues, to fast for weeks, to show extraordinary physical strength. A full description of this religious frenzy is to be found in "Chaitanya Bhagabat."

The following year the bhaktas again proceeded to see the Lord at Puri. This time the ladies insisted that they should go also. And thus husbands led their wives, sons their mothers, and brothers their sisters; and Sivananda Sen, the ardent follower of the Lord, undertook to bear all the passage expenses of the bhaktas. This pious duty the saint Sivananda performed for more than twenty years, always bearing the passage expenses of those who wanted to go to Puri to visit the Lord during the car ceremony. One of Sivananda's sons was the author of several books in Sanskrit, two of which dealt with the leelas of the Lord. One is "Chaitanya Charit," the other the drama "Chandrodaya Natak," to both of which we are vastly indebted for many of our facts related in this book.

When the bhaktas reached Puri, the Lord, with his Puri-followers, advanced to receive his guests. There were, of course, loud shouts of "the Lord," "the Lord," when they met. Sivananda had his eldest son, aged about 9, in his arms. The lad had never seen the Lord. He was going to see him for the first time, and the shouts proclaimed that the Lord had appeared on the scene. So he asked of his parent, "Father, who amongst the crowd, is the Lord?" Sivananda said in reply to the query of his child, "Does my Lord need to be pointed out? Does not he carry his credentials always with him? See there, my son, before you he stands, the tallest and fairest of all, surrounded by a celestial light which betokens his divinity. See, his lovely eyes, moist with unutterable love, indicate that he is the Beloved of all."

Well, the bhaktas again passed four months in Puri and were then sent back home by the Lord.

The four months that the bhaktas passed in Puri, were spent in daily, nay, hourly, festivities ;—not the festivities of the world, but of the inhabitants of that celestial abode of love and peace, called Brindaban. They rose in the morning to meet, and then sang together the glories of God ; they bathed in thousands amidst peal after peal of Haribole ; they all sat together, these hundreds, to dine and pass the time in discourses about Krishna, interrupted by frequent peals of Haribole. In the afternoon, they listened to the Holy Sreemat Bhagabat, and the night they passed in singing the glory of God. Every moment of their time was utilized in the service of God. They spent their days and nights in ecstacy.

The dreaded day of separation, however, at last arrived, and the Lord sat surrounded by his hundreds of Nadia bhaktas. He embraced every one of them, when giving leave. The turn of Basudeva came. He fell at the feet of the Lord and prayed for a *bar* (gift). He was the elder brother of Mukunda, and had only recently taken the shelter of the lotus feet of the Lord, long after his younger had done it. Basudeva was the meekest of the meek, holiest of the holy. His heart ceaselessly wept for the miseries of his fellows. Said Basudeva : "My Lord, O Thou Ocean of Mercy ! grant me one prayer. I am very miserable ; remove the misery of Thy servant. Thy people suffer for their sins, and the thought rends my heart. Grant me this, merciful God. Transfer the sins of all mankind on my shoulders, and let me go to hell and suffer. Let your other children be saved and made happy."

Now Basudeva was not playing a part. He was only urging a request to one, whom he knew in his heart to be the Lord God Himself. Having a heart which was as tender as butter, it melted at the sight of misery. He thought that the contemplation of this misery of mankind is more dreadful than the suffering of the misery itself. And thus he made his ever-memorable prayer.

This prayer was so extraordinary that its purport was not at

first understood by those present. But when they realized what Basudeva was aiming at, they were overcome by an indescribable feeling. The Lord himself showed his emotion by such signs as *pulak*, tears, etc. The Lord was deeply moved.

"Like Master, like bhakta," said they all, when they had been able to recover from their stupefaction. "The prayer is only worthy of a bhakta of Lord Gauranga," said they. "It is sacrifice alone which pleases God, and one like this has no parallel," said another.

The prayer of Basudeva shows how great man can make himself by bhakti. It shows how the loving Father has bound His children in indissoluble ties of love and is ever attracting them towards Him. Dear reader! contemplate this prayer of Basudeva,—it will do good to your soul. The pious and loving saint prays for the forgiveness of the sins of his fellows. But Basudeva went a little further: he undertook to bear the burden of the sins of the world on his own shoulders!

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CONVERSION OF THE LEADERS.

Lord Gauranga preached the equality of man. He preached that a pious Chandal (one of low caste) was superior to even a Brahmin who was an infidel. Naturally, the religion preached by the Lord and his followers, created enemies in Nadia. But strange it was that, whoever sought to oppose the Lord, had at last to succumb to him. Thus the leaders, one by one, were brought under the fold of the Lord. Adwaita, as the head of the Vaishnavas, had to yield his place to the Lord. Jagai and Madhai, the Rajas of Nadia, had to fall at the feet of the Lord, as the Kazi, the representative of the sovereign, was subsequently obliged to do. The king of Orissa, in whose territory the Lord had to live, acknowledged him as Avatar. There remained yet two brothers to subdue, *viz.*, the ministers of the king of Gaur, to remove all obstacles that stood against the spread of the faith. They were Brahmins, but they had to live like Mussulmans (for the king belonged to that faith), for the maintenance of their position, which was supreme in the province of Bengal. Of course, the king of Gaur was the sovereign, but all real power lay in the hands of the two brothers, the ministers. The two brothers had at last to come to the Lord, whom he named Rup and Sanatan, and sent to Brindaban to spread the faith in the North-West.

If Basudeva Sarvabhauma, the foremost intellectual man in

India, had been converted, there yet remained another, a rival of Sarvabhauma, and a superior too in some respects, to be brought into the fold. This was Prakasananda Saraswatee, the leading Sannyasee and Adwaitabadee in India.

Prakasananda was a deadly enemy of the religion of prem and bhakti. As the leader of the Sannyasees and a profoundly learned man, he was held in universal esteem. He had ten thousand disciples. As a spiritual leader, he ruled Benares with despotic sway. The Veda is the basis of Hinduism ; and, Prakasananda was their professor and expounder. The Lord himself, during one of his revelations in Nadia, had declared that Prakasananda was preaching anti-bhakti doctrines, and he would some time hereafter teach him a lesson !

Prakasananda, as I said, reigned supreme in Benares. He came to hear that a young Sannyasee, who had taken his initiation from Keshava Bharati, was being worshipped as Sree Krishna by a good many people, even by learned men in Nadia. The fame of the Lord had then spread throughout India. Prakasananda at first heard the rumour with indifference, but he was a little staggered when he heard that even Sarvabhauma had acknowledged him as Sree Krishna. Now these two foremost savants in India knew each other, and the conversion of Sarvabhauma naturally led the Benares Pundit to treat the new Avatar with more consideration. In the beginning he was only used to smile when he was told of the pretensions of a Nadia Pundit, who called himself Krishna. But when he heard that Sarvabhauma had accepted him as such without reserve, he condescended to take notice of the Avatar. He said that the so-called Avatar is not to be treated lightly, since he has been able to befool even that intellectual giant, Sarvabhauma. "The fact is," said he, "he is an occultist of gigantic powers, and has, therefore, been able to hypnotise my poor friend Sarvabhauma. If the humbug could be induced to come to Benares,

I have not the least doubt, his tricks would be exposed." The Benares savant thought absolutely sure in his mind that if "the great occultist" had been able to befool Sarvabhauma, he would surely not be able to befool himself, the great Saraswatee of Benares. Indeed, the idea of a man calling himself Krishna, and of others accepting him as such, appeared to him so funny, that he felt a deep curiosity to have a sight of the man himself, and the tricks he employed in befooling his victims. With this view he condescended so far as to write a letter to the Lord which contained two couplets, meaning in effect that "he is only a brute, who ignores Benares and lives in any other place." It was an indirect command to the Lord to come to Benares.

Strange as it may appear, the Lord actually sent a reply to that silly letter. His reply was exceedingly courteous, not rude like the communication of the Saraswatee. He, however, declined to go, on the simple ground that Sree Krishna in Neelachal was enough for him. The Saraswatee then formed the plan of discrediting the Lord by circulating libels against him. And with that view he wrote in reply a most scurrilous and abusive letter to the Lord. Now, as these were open letters, and were likely to be read all over India, the two combatants, the Lord and the Saraswatee, being the two most distinguished men in the country, the Benares savant, by this means of epistolary correspondence, sought to create scandals against the Lord. Indeed, the more he thought of it, the more incumbent a duty he thought it to be his, as the foremost religious teacher in India, to discredit and expose the humbug who was actually extorting honours due to God Almighty, from not only the ignorant, but also the learned.

To the latter communication the Lord gave, however, no reply. These letters are extant.

The Lord, while proceeding to Brindaban, which he was pleased to do six years after his renunciation, passed through

Benares. Eleven years before this, he had bid Tapan Misra to proceed to Benares and live there where he (the Lord) promised he would meet the exile. (*Vide* Vol. I, page 45). In pursuance of that promise, the Lord, when he arrived at Benares, agreed to be the guest of that saint in that city.

Prakasananda had before desired the presence of the Lord in his city; but now we see the Master actually there on his way to Brindaban. We may as well give here, therefore, a very short account of the encounter of the Lord with Prakasananda, though it is beyond the scope of my original programme. The Lord stayed in the city for some time, but declined to pay a visit to the savant. The appearance of the Lord in the town created a sensation, and Prakasananda heard of his arrival; but he felt it a condescension to come and see the Lord. The Lord, on the other hand, though he stayed in the city for some days, yet declined to pay a visit to Prakasananda. And thus there was no meeting between them on that occasion. The Lord from there proceeded to Brindaban.

This was an opportunity for the savant to display his spite against the Lord. "Did I not tell you," said he to his followers, "that in this city the Avatar would find a hard place to show his tricks? He dared not come to us, nay, you see he has already fled." But the Lord again returned to Benares from Brindaban on his way back to Neelachal!

"He is come back, is it?" said he, when he heard of the return of the Lord. "Rest assured, he will not venture to approach us." The Lord, who resided concealed in a hut, had been yet seen by a good many people, and they had surrendered themselves to him. These men naturally ran to the first man in Benares, the savant, to impart the glad tidings that a young Sannyasee had come, who is, there was no doubt, Sree Krishna Himself. And whenever he heard this, the savant laughed in derision, and warned them not to approach

that occultist whose company itself would be damnation. "Those who announce themselves as God Almighty," said the savant to these new converts of the Lord, "and those who accept such Avatars, are both damned." These frequent conversions in the city only increased the spite of the savant against the Lord.

But the converts remained unmoved. They were sure of their Avatar, and they felt that if the savant had but an opportunity of coming across the Lord he would be instantly converted. But neither does he come, nor does the Lord condescend to go to him. How is this meeting to be brought about? Thus the converts counselled amongst themselves.

Of course, they teased the Lord with relations of their sorrow. They told him how the savant hated him, reviled him, and had already created a strong party in the town against him. He was an unfortunate man, that savant and Sannyasee. Was it not the duty of the Lord, they added, the Saviour of mankind, to save him too, who exercised such a baneful influence over his fellows?

But whenever these complaints were brought to the notice of the Lord, he made no reply, but only sweetly smiled.

One of these new converts, a Maharatta Brahmin, thought of a plan. He invited all the Sannyasees of the town, thousands of them, to break fast at his place. He then, with other converts, came to the Lord to beseech him to accept the invitation.

The Lord, understanding their real motives for this invitation, smiled, but said nothing.

Upon this, all the leading converts who were in this conspiracy, fell at his feet, and implored him to accept the invitation. They then frankly confessed that the invitation of the savant and his followers was only a plan to bring them face to face with the Lord. They said: "My Lord, they revile you because they have never seen you. A sight of your divine person will convert them. Kindly come only to save us from life-long persecutions.

You are indifferent to praise and blame, but when you are gone, the whole town will persecute us by reviling you. How will it be possible for us to bear abuses levelled at the Soul of our souls? Grant unto us this prayer, our good Lord, and accept the invitation."

The Lord again smiled, and this time agreed to come!

The Sanñyasees, many thousands of them, sat under big canopies. They had heard that the Lord was coming. Now, in spite of the apparent contempt of Prakasananda for the Lord, which he never let slip an opportunity of showing, he had come to feel some respect for the being who had succeeded in making even Sarvabhauma bow to him as God Himself. He had, however, a firm conviction that "the pretender" would never dare approach him. But when he heard that the great party had been organized by the Maharatta Brahmin—one who had, in spite of his strict injunction, accepted the Lord,—solely with the object of bringing him and the so-called occultist, *i. e.*, the Lord, together, he felt something like a flutter in his heart. "What does this mean?" thought the sage. "He is coming to me; he knows that I have the utmost contempt for him, and that I have never concealed this fact either from himself or from the public. Yet he comes to me, and in the midst of thousands of my disciples! What does he mean?"

Now Prakasananda was master there in that city; he had besides never known an equal, except perhaps Sarvabhauma. He was there in the midst of thousands of his own men. Yet the stranger, whom he had persistently reviled, was coming to him, as it were, in his own stronghold. That was, no doubt, a challenge. And the sage felt, imperceptibly within himself, not only a curiosity for a sight of the Lord, but some trepidation at the approaching encounter. "Would he also hypnotize me, as he had done Sarvabhauma?" thought the sage, and tried to smile away the indefinite dread that sought to seize him.

The Lord came to the party, accompanied by four of his disciples. He was in a perfectly conscious state. He came slowly with bent head, as if engrossed with himself. The word flew from mouth to mouth that Krishna-Chaitanya was coming, and every Sannyasee sought to have a peep at him, as his gigantic figure loomed in the distance. Prakasananda tried to seem indifferent, but yet he could not help taking his full share of the sight of the approaching figure.

The presence of the Lord at once confounded the sage. "Here is no doubt a *Mahapurush* (grand man)," thought Prakasananda, "What majesty in the man!" The Lord, however, slowly approached. There was, outside the cover of the canopies, water for the guests to wash their feet. The custom is for the guests to wash their feet and then to sit in the bedding spread for them. The Lord came with bent head, saluted all the congregated Sannyasees, washed his feet, and then, without entering within, sat there!

Ordinarily Prakasananda would have never permitted an invited guest to sit outside, as a beggar, as the Lord had done. When, therefore, he saw the Lord taking his seat outside, he felt a compunction in his heart. He thought that he had given the stranger every right to avoid him by his unjust treatment of him. Then, if he was the leader in that company, the stranger was an invited guest of his host. And thus he required consideration at his hand. There was another thought which entered his mind. He knew that his host, the Maharatta Brahmin, had sold himself to the stranger; and would it be proper for him, thought he, that simply because he was there strong in followers, he would permit such a man to be submitted to the disgrace of sitting outside?

But Prakasananda was moved for other serious reasons. He had now a closer view of the Lord. And the sight, as it were, paralyzed him with astonishment. Is this the humbug who

hypnotises men like Sarvabhauma? Apparently that can never be. For, he seems innocence, modesty, meekness incarnate. And how intelligent he looks! There can possibly be no guile in the man. Perhaps I have wronged him. All the above ideas passed rapidly through his mind. He felt deep compunction for having sought to injure such a good soul, as the stranger seemed to be.

He rose to address the Lord, and when he stood up the thousands rose with him. He said, "Swamee! I can never permit this. You must come within and give us the pleasure and benefit of your company." The Lord in reply said with folded hands that he implored to be left where he was. He belonged to a lower order, (he being a Bharati, and Prakasananda a Saraswatee) and not fit to sit in the midst of such august company.

Prakasananda said, "this can never be," and then he came forward, took the Lord by the hand, and made him sit by himself. His conscience continued to prick him. He had treated the stranger with injustice and meanness for which he had no excuse to console himself. His object of persecution had never given him offence, nor even resented the treatment that he had accorded to him. The man had come to him as the humblest of the humble, bearing in his face and attitude no trace of any ill-feeling towards him. He wanted to make up for his past injustice, and so he addressed the Lord in the gentlest language possible. "Swamee," said he, "you belong to our order. You have been staying in this city. Yet you do not associate with us."

In reply the Lord muttered some half-audible excuse. But the sage felt within himself that he had no right to blame the stranger for his unwillingness to come to him. For, was it not he who had made it impossible for the Lord to seek his company? So, not getting a reply to his question and not wishing to get one, lest the Lord alluded to the sage's treatment of himself, he changed the subject of talk and said again: "Besides, I

have a complaint to make. You are not only a Sannyasee like us, but you seem to be a celestial being in disguise. Yet, how is it, you do not perform one of the chief duties of our order, that is, the reading of the Vedas? Then, it is no secret, for the world knows it, that you indulge in singing and dancing, which are abominations to us ascetics. If you, who are born to be a leader, indulge in such practices, a bad example will be set and ascetics as a class are likely to be demoralized. Will you kindly explain your motives for such conduct, for they must be excellent?"

In the above, the sage naturally assumed the position of a superior, and the Lord as naturally replied as an inferior. Said he: "Sreepad, I shall frankly confess to you my condition. My Guru, seeing that I was a dunce and not an over-intelligent disciple, suggested to me, that any of the intricate methods followed by our order would not suit me, and that for a man in my position, the only possible course was to pursue a straight and simple path, which was to utter the name of Sree Krishna. 'Do it, my son,' said he, 'and you will obtain the highest blessings that are open to mankind.' Following the above command, I took shelter under the lotus feet of Sree Krishna, and continued diligently and faithfully to utter His name. Ignorant as I was, this mode of worship suited me very well. But a strange thing happened. The name had a power which enthralled me, and I began to dance and sing in the joy of my heart. One thought, however, checked the flow of this ecstacy. Was I getting mad? And in terror, I ran to my Guru and told him my condition. I told him, 'Master, what sort of name have you given me to repeat? It has already done a good deal of mischief. I am led by it, to sing and dance like a mad man. Tell me now what am I to do, and how to extricate myself from this strange disease?'" *

* *Vide* the talk of the Lord with Sreebas, Vol. I, pages 87 & 88.

"My Guru," continued the Lord, "smiled at my apprehension and told me that it was no disease that had overtaken me. 'The name of the beloved God Krishna,' said my Guru, 'is like Himself irresistibly powerful. You have got your reward. That is the way every one is affected, who sincerely sticks to uttering His name. In short, my son, you have got a touch of Krishna-prem which gods hanker after. You are a lucky individual; you have got the blessings of Sree Krishna, and I am lucky in having such a disciple.'"

"Well," continued the Lord, addressing the sage, "so, you see, Sreepad, I have told you all. It is true, I dance and sing. I do not do it willingly. It is the power, possessed by the name of the Great and Beloved Being, Krishna, which makes me do it."

When the Lord alluded to this Great Being, a thrill passed, not only through the frame of the sage but his followers as well. The Lord spoke amidst breathless silence. His sweet and sonorious voice, the pathos in his tone, the holy light that played about his person joyously, affected all those who saw and heard him. The sage was himself powerfully moved. Yet he tried to maintain the superiority of his position, which he had assumed before, and said: "Your explanation in exceedingly satisfactory and soothing. It is quite true that the Shastras say that Krishna-prem is the most coveted of all blessings, but yet you have not kindly explained why you don't read the Vedas."

The Lord replied, "the original Vedas are good and ennobling, but Shankara makes them support pantheistic doctrines which, however, they do not. By the Vedas you mean their interpretations by Shankara. They make no differance between man and God. Now, as a humble worshipper of the Deity, I cannot read Shankara's versions without giving a very great shock to my feelings."

Prakasananda was startled. He was a follower of Shankara, like other Sannyasees. He had very little faith in God, but an unalterable one in Shankara. He, however, did not

lose temper at what the Lord said. Yet he wanted to know what grounds had the Swamee to speak so disparagingly of a master whom the world worshipped.

The Lord said : " The Vedas are attributed to God Himself. That being the case the Vedas themselves ought to extort greater respect than the interpretations, by whomsoever made. The Vedas are simple enough. I think it is not difficult to show that Shankara's versions are faulty."

" Let us then hear how you interpret them," said the sage with great curiosity. He was the first man in Vedas in India. He was, therefore, quite confident that there was no chance of the young stranger saying anything which he did not know, and which, if objectionable, he would not be able to refute. The Lord began to criticise the interpretations of Shankara. He had once to do this before Sarvabhauma.

The sage and his followers were amazed. They had all followed the renderings of Shankara blindly, never giving a thought that there could be any mistake in them. But the Lord made it clear to the meanest apprehension that the interpretations were unfair and far-fetched.

The sage found himself lost in thought. He then addressed the Lord : " I have followed you, Swamee, with great attention. You have done your task in a thorough manner. You have shown superhuman powers in criticizing so successfully the works of a master of masters like Shankara. None hitherto had ventured it. Neither do I feel any inclination to find fault with your criticisms, for, apparently they seem to be just. But let us now hear how you explain the original Vedas."

This the Lord did. He showed from the Vedas that God has a spiritual form for the worshipper, and that he is to be attained only by prem and bhakti.

The discourse of the Lord produced the same effect upon the ascetics as a similar one had produced upon Sarvabhauma. The

learning of the Lord at first amazed them. His expositions made it clear to them all that what they had hitherto believed was a mistake, and that they had been misled by Shankara. The admiration for the Lord was, however, supplanted by another higher feeling, when he began to talk to them of God, and prem and bhakti. Discourses about God, in the mouths of pious men, are always sweet. In the mouth of the Lord they maddened the ascetics with pleasure. They had never before tasted the ecstacy that proceeds from bhakti. Its taste intoxicated them, and they felt all irresistibly attracted towards the Lord. All the Sannyasees wanted to speak, but the presence of the leader restrained them. Prakasananda, however, broke the silence.

He addressed the Lord. "Swamee," said he, "you know I have been reviling you. The reason is, I was arrogant from pride and vanity. I felt I had no equal, and therefore I had a right to give the law to others. I ought to ask forgiveness of you for my unjust behaviour to you. I see, however, there is no need of doing it. Indeed, to ask forgiveness of you is to do you injustice. You don't need to be asked for forgiveness. My eyes are opened to-day. I thought I understood the Vedas, but the fact is that it is only to-day that I begin to understand it. I consider my new birth to commence from this day. Yes, you are my Guru, lead me to Krishna-prem."

All the above Prakasananda said with inexpressible pathos, like one, not only humbled and chastened, but saturated with bhakti. The others followed in the same strain.

It became known in the town immediately that Prakasananda, with all his followers, have been defeated by the young Sannyasee from Nadia, known as the Avatar of Krishna, and that they have also renounced their faith and accepted prem and bhakti. There was, of course, the other rumour that Sree Krishna Himself had come. And thus the hut, where the Lord had concealed himself, was besieged day and night by vast crowds. The Lord had

agreed to stop in this big city for a short time, provided his bhaktas could give him a solitary hut to live in, undisturbed by the presence of crowds. But vast crowds came, in spite of the endeavours of the devotees of the Lord to prevent them. These men, however, had only three opportunities of seeing the Lord, *viz.*, on the three occasions when he proceeded to bathe in the river Ganges.

On the following day there was a talk in the company of the Sannyasees about the stranger. Said the ascetic, the next in importance to Prakasananda: "It is lucky the young stranger came. We have hitherto dissipated our energies. Nothing like bhakti to God. The sweet words of the stranger are yet ringing in my ears. Let us worship Krishna." And, as a matter of fact, he uttered a short prayer to Krishna, which was repeated by many others.

Prakasananda said: "Yes, you are quite right. The stranger has opened our eyes. Let us worship Krishna." And there was again a short prayer to Krishna from his lips. The sage was in a thoughtful mood. He was a leader, a man most positive and aggressive in his nature. He found himself suddenly deprived of all that he possessed. All his ideas and notions, acquired after an amount of toil and sufferings which are indescribable, have been proved worthless by the young man. And did I fast and sleep on bare grounds for forty years for this?—thought he, and, of course, sighed. He had, however, another cause of sorow. He felt that he had been annihilated. Was he not the first man in India? Had he not reviled the young man? Had he not spoken to everyone who came to talk to him of the Lord, levelling the foulest epithets upon Krishna-Chaitanya, the humbug and the cheat? Has he not been persecuting the Lord before the world these four years? To be crushed, in this manner, by the same man before all his disciples and a large concourse of people who regarded him as one next to the Deity in importance, was a great blow to him.

But there was still another greater difficulty which beset him. He found that though the youngster had annihilated him before the world, he could not yet entertain in his heart any feeling of vindictiveness towards him. He found that the young man had taken entire possession of his heart. He had been trained to subdue, nay eradicate, all tender sentiments from the heart, but the young stranger had softened it and made his impress upon it. He found the picture of the Lord in his heart indelibly impressed; and he could not divest himself of it by all his efforts. The musical voice of the Lord rang in his ears incessantly, and he fancied as if the picture was yet talking to him. The lovely gaze of the Lord to him, when he was explaining the Vedas, penetrated deep in his heart. It seemed to him that the picture was gazing at him still in the same lovely manner.

The picture did not prove disagreeable in the least. On the contrary, it soothed his soul and gave him infinite pleasure. The fact was, the sage, in spite of his asceticism, had been seized by *purvarag*, and felt an irresistible attraction towards the Lord. He would have run to the Lord, and he could have easily bartered all that he possessed, even his soul, to secure the privilege of securing his company, but pride, which oftentimes proves an all-controlling passion, and a trace of which yet remained in his heart, restrained him. How could he now run to the Lord, without making himself the laughing-stock of the whole town?

He himself thus describes his own condition in a sloka of his: "A stronger being than myself,—a fair-coloured thief,—has forcibly stolen from me my religious faith founded upon the Vedas, the rules that I strictly followed, my prejudice against kirtan, poetry and drama, nay, even the ordinary laws of nature (eating, sleeping, etc.) that I have hitherto followed."* The sage felt that he was

*Prakasananda, after his conversion, wrote a book called "Chaitanya Chandramrita," from which the above and the slokas subsequently noticed are quoted. It is one of the most powerful of Sanskrit works that the advent of the Lord created.

getting mad, and in this manner, he passed about a couple of days, talking to none but himself, thinking of nothing but the Lord, forgetting food and sleep.

Just then he heard a noise in the town. A moment later he heard from a messenger that the noise was due to the presence of a crowd, which had gathered to see the young stranger Sannyasee dancing! It came about in this way. The Lord, on that morning, on his way home from his bath in the river, paid, as usual, a visit to the Temple of Bindu-Madhav, where there is a beautiful Image of Krishna. He saw the Image and was at once entranced, and began to dance in his ecstacy. Of course, an ever-increasing crowd was following him from his bath, but seeing the dance of the Lord, the vast assemblage raised the shout of "Hari, Hari," and that was the cause of the noise that the sage had heard.

Now the sage has seen the Lord and his sinless and celestial face, as also his lovely eyes. He has heard him talk,—his sweet and sonorous voice has entered his ears; he has watched the wave of pleasure that passed through his face and whole frame when speaking of Krishna, but he had never seen this same lovely being in a state of trance. Here is a lucky opportunity, thought the sage, and he announced his intentions to his followers, as he ran, almost in a state of frenzy, to see the Lord in his ecstatic dance. Of course, his disciples followed. Seeing Prakasananda and his followers, the crowd gave way, and thus he found himself face to face with the Lord.

What he saw let Prakasananda himself describe:

"I salute to the Prince of Masters, Sree Chaitanya, who is saturated with incomparable holy spirit; who is dancing, and giving graceful motion to his feet, uplifted gold-like arms, and to his waving body; who is uttering that joy-giving name Hari Hari in a state of ecstacy, and thus withdrawing all evils from the world."

The Lord himself, of course, was unaware, not only of the presence of the crowd, but also of Prakasananda. The dance of Lord Gauranga was always irresistible, and Prakasananda could not resist it. Hitherto he had voted the Lord merely as Prince of Masters, but now he came to suspect that he was somebody higher. Here is another sloka of his. He says :—

प्रवाहैरश्रूणां नवजलदकोटी इव दृशौ
दधानं प्रेमर्द्धौ परमपदकोटीः प्रहसनम् ।
वमन्तं माधुर्यैरमृतनिधिकोटीरिव तनु-
च्छटाभिस्तं वन्दे हरिं महह सन्यासकपटम् ॥

"The Being, whose couple of eyes are like clouds raining incessant tears; who, by his display of love, is creating a disgust in the minds of men for Heaven (where gods reside) itself; and who is emitting an ocean of nectar and grace, is no other than the Lord God Himself in the guise of a Sannyasee, and Him I salute."

Thus, in the first stage, the sage was purged out of his vanity and other passions which sullied his soul. When this was done, he was entitled to discern truth. In the second stage, there was struggle between the truth and vanity in his mind, and the former triumphantly entered and expelled the other. His third stage was to feel veneration and attraction for the Lord, as a devoted disciple does for his master. His fourth stage was to be entitled to the knowledge that that Being, whom he had fancied to be a mere master, was even higher than that, being God Almighty Himself, though concealed in the guise of a Sannyasee. His fifth stage yet to be attained was,—to fall in love with God!

Now, pure love is a quite different thing from what a wife, generally speaking, feels for her husband, or a mother feels for her child. When love appears in the heart, it subordinates every other feeling. It is something like what an infatuated woman feels for her lover. Yet her feeling for her lover can never

be true; for, the object is impure.* The sage felt that it was the Lord God that was dancing before him, but yet he had not then actually fallen in love with Him.

The Lord was dancing before him in infinite joy, and torrents of tears were trickling down his cheeks. Step by step the sage found himself drawn into the current created by the scene. From his heart he had all his life tried to exterminate all tender sentiments, yet they remained there, in spite of himself, not dead but undeveloped. All these now became vivified and gained an ascendency over him. The result was, the sage found tears in his eyes, tears which he had not shed for the last forty years. In short, he found himself weeping,—weeping with joy!

"Oh joy, oh joy," cried he. He had no notion that there was joy in this earth, and joy from sources which he had tried to shut up with such mighty efforts. Overpowered, he began to imitate the Lord in his dance. Not that he actually danced, but it seemed to those who watched him that the Lord had taken possession of every nerve of his body, and that the sage was, as it were, helplessly following all the movements of the dancing figure before him. The tears that flowed from his eyes gradually cleared his sight, and then he saw that the dancing figure was no longer a Sannyasee, but a gold-bodied youth of exquisite beauty and indescribable grace. The sage then fell in love with the Lord!

The noise of the vast crowd jarred in the ears of the Lord, and he gradually came to consciousness.

And what did he see? He saw that the sage himself, with his followers, was standing just before him, his face suffused with tears. Seeing this, the Lord, now a bashful and meek youth,

* A good many people express a surprise that the pure love of Radha should be likened to that of an abandoned woman, who has fallen in love with one who is not her husband. The reason is that it is the love of the abandoned woman alone that can give some definite idea of what is called Krishna-*prem*.

fell at the feet of the sage for his blessing. But the sage expressed his horror at this movement of the Lord. He said: "Don't endanger my after-life by your meekness, it has already been jeopardised. There is a Shastric text that he who reviles God is for ever damned. But there is another text which says that, the touch of the lotus feet of God cures all evil. I reviled you, so I have destroyed my future prospects. Now, let me have a touch of your feet and save myself!" Saying this he fell at the feet of the Lord before the vast crowd.

The Lord, however, could not allow this. He was then in his normal or rather human state. He, therefore, reminded the sage that to call a man God is blasphemy, and he, whose function is to give law to his followers, should avoid committing it. The sage in reply said: "I have known Thee in my heart which Thou hast now completely occupied. But if you choose to remain incognito for purposes of your own, which must be inscrutable to us poor mortals, yet, as a bhakta of God, you are worthy of my reverence, who is an infidel."

The Lord restrained his feelings, because the conversation between him and the sage was being heard by a large number of people, and let the sage understand that the talk ought to be deferred for a more convenient occasion. The Lord came back to his hut. There was, after this, indescribable commotion in the town. But I am anticipating—the Prakasananda incident happened at a period, which is beyond the limit I had assigned for this book. At night Prakasananda Saraswatee came to pay the Lord a visit. They met in private; the Lord took him in his bosom and they both fell in a swoon, clasped in each other's arm. After a while, they rose. Said the Lord: "You better go to Brindaban, that is the place for you."

Prakasananda.—No, that cannot be. I eradicated every tender feeling from my heart. The result is re-action. I am now in violent love. I cannot live without you.

The Lord.—No, you must go to Brindaban, go and spread the faith there and save people. As for me when you feel my separation sorely, you shall have a sight of me in your heart.

The sage was deeply disappointed, but there was no help, there was the divine command. He then again observed slowly : "If I can see your figure in my heart when it hankers after you, I think I shall be able to manage it somehow or other. This assurance, my Lord, reconciles me to my fate. Your assurance gives me joy."

The Lord.—Henceforth let, therefore, your name be Prabodhananda. ["Prabodh" means assurance and "ananda" means joy.] Thenceforth he was called Prabodhananda Saraswatee.

Thus Prabodhananda, early the following day, left Benares for Brindaban, as the Lord left Benares for Puri. There Prabodhananda wrote several books, a couple of which is extant, one of which is "Chaitanya Chandramrita.". In this book he, in a series of slokas, gives an idea of the beauty, the goodness and power of the Lord, and of his own feelings towards him,—how He entered into his heart and occupied it. That book is a source of delight to all bhaktas of our Lord. From some of these slokas put together, the following song is prepared which is an address of Prabodhananda to the Lord. When the latter refused to take Prabodhananda with him, the sage expressed his disappointment in a series of slokas. The following song is founded upon them :

"What have you done ? (my Lord). You stole my heart, maddened me, and then left me !

"I was dignified, deep, firm and strong, nothing could move or shake me from my resolve. But what hast Thou done ? Thou hast driven from my mind my fear of public opinion, the respect that I felt for the dignity of my position, and made me as silly as a boy.

"I rent asunder the ties that kept me chained to the world.

But what a mishap? You have again chained me by the ties of love (to Thee)."

The slokas from this book of his, " Chaitanya Chandramrita" would give the world an idea how the Lord appeared to him. The slokas, quoted before, were from this book : here is another :

धर्म्मास्पृष्टः सतत परमाविष्ट एवात्यधर्म्मे
दृष्टिं प्राप्तो नहि खलु सतां सृष्टिषु क्वापिनोसन् ।
यद्दत्त श्रीहरिरससुधास्वादमत्तः प्रनृत्य-
त्युच्चैर्गायत्यथ विलुठति स्तौमि तं कञ्चिदीशम् ॥

"I salute that Sree Gauranga who made such people maddened with a taste of Krishna-prem so as to lead them to dance, sing and roll on the ground in ecstacy, as had before never done one meritorious act ; on the other hand who had spent their lives in sinful acts, and had never come across a saint or a saintly place."

And how did he convert such "iron" into "gold," that is, made absolutely a pious man of an absolutely sinful man? Prabodhananda describes the process, in another sloka, thus :

दृष्टः स्पृष्टः कीर्त्तितः संस्मृतो वा दूरस्थैरप्यानतो वादृतो वा ।
प्रेम्नः सारं दातुमीशो य एकः श्रीचैतन्यं नौमि देवं दयालुम् ॥

"I salute that all-merciful Master, Gauranga, whose mere touch or sight or grace is enough for a man to get prem, and who confers the secrets of prem even upon those who are far away from him, only if they revere him in their hearts."

Such was the power possessed by the Lord, and thus he was worshipped as the Lord Almighty by men, even by his most intellectual and learned contemporaries !

The Lord had promised to his mother that he would come to pay her a visit. Besides, under the rules, as I said before, he was bound to take a final leave of his native village. The Lord, therefore, started for Nadia five years after his renunciation. But his Puri followers would not permit it, that is to say, they clung to him,—men, women and children. They must follow him wherever he goes. It was explained to them that the Lord would come back in a short time, but they could not be persuaded to stay. It was with great difficulty that the Lord succeeded in eluding their pursuit to proceed on his way.

The ascetics, however, all followed him. Sarvabhauma was allowed to accompany him for a day or two, and then he was persuaded to return. He returned weeping. Ramananda followed in a conveyance, not having the strength to proceed on foot. In all, more than a hundred followed him. They had to pass through the capital town Katak, where the king lived. The Lord, after breaking his fast, was taking his rest under a banian tree, when the king approached. On this occasion he came with his kingly garb on, supported by his ministers and followed by his troops. He came and prostrated before the Lord, the golden crown on his head touching the lotus feet of the Lord. The Lord raised him and embraced him.

On reaching Bengal, the Lord found himself surrounded by a sea of faces. He landed at Panihati, which is near Calcutta, at Pundit Raghava's. From there, till he reached Nadia, he found himself constantly in the midst of crowds which were so vast as to be beyond computation. The chroniclers say that to count the number that surrounded the Lord, when he came back to Bengal, is as impossible as to count the sands on the sea-shore.

For seven days he was in the town of Kulia, which was on the opposite bank of the river which passes by Nadia, to meet all his early friends.

He then crossed the river and landed at his own bathing

ghat. An immense concourse of people followed him,—silently. They all remembered the days when he sported as a restless youth and flourished as a young savant: they now saw him a saint of serious aspect with the garb of a mendicant on.

He stood before his own door. His mother Shachee came out in the streets, and he prostrated himself before her, though this was against law. Vishnupriya was within; she had no right to come, and no one expected to see her there. But sure enough, a veiled lady came before the Lord, and fell prostrate before him. Seeing that the figure was that of a woman, the Lord retreated a step or two. The prostrate lady said: "Thou hast, my Lord, saved the world. And is Thy servant alone to remain a forsaken being?"

The Lord, as also others, then came to know that she was Vishnupriya.

A shade of sorrow passed through the divine face of the Lord. He said: "Serve Krishna."

Vishnupriya.—Leave me some token that I may soothe my heart by it.

The Lord pondered. He said: "You see, I have nothing."

Vishnupriya.—Leave me Thy sandals.

And the Lord left them. The lady took them reverentially, and placed them on her head. That was their last meeting.

The sandals are now worshipped.

END OF VOL. II.

APPENDIX.

CHAPTER A.

So much of God, as is within the capacity of man to comprehend, can be known by observation and meditation; devotion and inspiration; and direct messages from Heaven. The last come to man either in the shape of inspiration to certain individuals fit to receive them, or are brought down by beings who are called Messiahs or Avatars, who announce themselves as such, and are accepted as such by, not only many of their contemporaries, but many of succeeding generations.

God is believed to be unknowable and inaccessible, but Prophets have assured us that the door is opened to him who persistently knocks at it. God is worth the trouble of a search. God is not found, not because He is unknowable and inaccessible, but because He is never seriously sought. Let an honest and persistent inquirer observe all that he sees around him and within himself, and he will find that many of the mysteries regarding God and creation, that surround him, will be explained to him.

He first comes to acknowledge the existence of an intelligent and all-powerful Creator. This he is forced to do because he cannot conceive of a well-arranged creation without an intelligent cause, nay, he cannot conceive of his own existence without his Creator. Of course, there are men who profess atheism, but they deceive themselves. It is simply impossible for a man, constituted as he is, to divest his mind of the notion of a

Supreme Lord, the Master and Creator of all.* The so-called atheist who professes an unbelief in the existence of God, will be obliged to admit Him at a moment of imminent peril, though he may not continue to acknowledge it, from foolish pride, when the danger is over.

The inquirer feels that the Creator is one and is as vast as the universe; that, as the Creator of intelligent beings, He must be also Himself intelligent; and that as man and nature are evolved out of Him, something at least of Him can be known by studying nature and the human mind. He feels also that God is also like a man *plus* something, which something marks Him out from the latter.

It is this "something," which, however, bewilders him. That "something" is beyond the reach of the human intellect. A man can only conceive of a man, but he can never go beyond that. He may try to conceive God as something different from himself; he can furnish Him with more hands and heads, but still the God of his most extravagant fancies will practically remain a man. He can describe Him in such language as "One who has no beginning or end," but he will never be able to conceive of the Being agreeing with such a description. The words 'all-pervading,' 'all-powerful,' &c., can never convey any definite meaning to the human mind, for, it can never go beyond a certain limit. It is easy to declare that the sun is ninety-five millions of miles from here, but difficult to realize the fact. The sun, however, is only a speck in this great universe of God, and God is at least as big as His creation.

Staggered by his attempt to realize this something † of God

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* As God is worth the trouble of a search, let an unbeliever who is sincere, seek the company of pious men, dead or living. That is, besides the grace of God, the only remedy that I know for the cure of scepticism.

† People, generally speaking, seek to worship this 'something' and thus fail to realize their expectations. They feel that in comparison to God man

which marks Him out from man, the inquirer has to come down to the reach of his own capacity to have a conception of his Creator. And, as I said before, since he cannot conceive of a sentient being different from himself, he realizes the stern fact that the God realizable to man can, at the most, be a grand man, withal, being at the same time, Infinite and Eternal. Says the Seer Swedenberg, a thorough Christian and an avowed worshipper of the Almighty God of the Bible, that God is only a "Grand Man." That must be the conclusion of every sincere and persistent seeker of God.

To the true man of religion God is, not only what marks Him out from man, but is also what makes Him common with man. The first part of God is useless to him, and he sticks to that which is common to both. As he develops himself, he appropriates to himself, little by little, this something which, in the beginning, is beyond his reach, and becomes gradually more divine in nature in his progress. And thus the Advaita doctrine "He and I are the same" is justified.

If He is a man, has He all the base passions which lead humanity to temptations? Or is He simply a perfect being, without a blemish?

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is only a puny creature, and they would thus consider it a sacrilege to give God any human attribute at all. Those who call themselves iconoclasts, *i. e.* consider it a sacrilege to give God a human form, however, practically do it by giving to him human attributes, not only the finer ones, *viz*, love, mercy, justice, but also of wrathfulness, vengefulness, vanity and so forth. According to popular notion, God is only like a human tyrant. It was Vaishnavism alone, as a creed, which rejected without reserve this 'something' in God as beyond the reach of human capacity, and worshipped Him as a Grand Man. If realization of God,—His companionship,—is the aim of life, it is a futile attempt to seek a God of light, an all-pervading God, and an Almighty God. The Vaishnavas sought as much of God as the human mind could conceive, and thus succeeded in "entrapping" Him. To ask the companionship of God as light, is to make a ridiculous mistake, since we cannot bear the companionship of even the sun, which is only His creation.

A superficial survey of nature does not show that He is all-good. Of course, there is delightful shower after a hot day, but we have, on the other hand, tornadoes and thunder-storms. If we see mothers supplied with milk for their forthcoming off-spring, we see, on the other hand, dear objects snatched away by death, which lead wives to weep for their husbands and mothers for their children. Indeed, what we see around us, is evil ; but "evil" from an all-merciful and all-powerful God is impossible.

A closer examination shows, however, that there are evils which are more seeming than real. If fire is a destroyer, it is also an useful agent. It comes to this then that, oftentimes blessings are converted into evils by our own folly. Indeed, man can, by the exercise of judgment and care, bring many evils under control. Realizing this, some bhaktas consider that they have a right to declare that there is no evil at all in the world ; and, that being the case, it is unjust to blame God. But the inquirer says in reply that, men are utterly helpless and their capacities are limited, nay, it is impossible for them to avert dangers, even when they discern their presence. When this is the case, it is unjust to hold them responsible for acts, over which they have not been empowered, by their Creator, to exercise any control. Is it good of God, says the excellent inquirer, to surround man with dangers without giving him the power of discerning and averting them, nay, sometimes with temptations to lead his helpless creatures into them ?

It is said, man has a free will. But, says the sceptic, what is the good of a free will when he cannot discern the dangers that surround him, and avert them when he has discerned them? And if God is good, why is there so much misery in the world? These are the problems which are exercising the minds of men from time immemorial.

But can the critic of God's creation suggest a better one? Let us create our man. Let us give him eternal youth and

health; and let him be placed in this world for ever. Let us put him in the Garden of Eden, where he has only to pluck the fruits to satisfy his hunger,—where there is no disease and no accident.

Such a man will not, however, bless but curse his Creator; for, he will find everything insipid after a short experience. Do we not see men, apparently favoured in every respect, detesting the so-called pleasures, that surround them? How can one see the same thing, and enjoy the same thing, every day of his life? Can a man live a thousand years in the world without cursing his fate, though all the while enjoying health and plenty?

Let us now examine the man as created by God. His destiny is progress. When man has grown as much as it is possible for him to do on this earth, he is taken away to another world. So what He ordained is eternal progress, and in this manner is secured everlasting growth and joy for man. If we assume that there is an after-existence, the poignancy of much of the evils in the world, is reduced; some are altogether conquered; and some converted into actual blessings. Thus death, which is considered the greatest of evils, would then be voted as the greatest of boons, if it leads men to a better world. A man, who is assured of an after-existence and a re-union with friends, will find that more than three-fourths of the miseries of this world are delusions.

The question, which exercises the minds of men is,—if God is good, why men are made to suffer at all? It is true, man apparently is free to choose good from evil, but really he is not so independent. Disease strikes him down in spite of himself, and it kills him in spite of himself. And this means not only his own misery, but the misery of those who love him or depend upon him for support.

Let us, following the example of the great book, the Geeta, reduce the questions and answers into the form of a dialogue

between man and his Creator, to make the points as clear as possible. The devotee asks God to explain why there is evil in His creation, and Krishna replies :—

" You are a child, with limited capacity. You cannot possibly know all that move Me,—is it not ? You will thus have to know for ever and ever ; you cannot begin life with full knowledge of everything. That privilege belongs to *Me alone*, and none else. The attempts that you will make to know, will be a source of joy to you, and help you in your growth and development. This ought to be a satisfactory reply to all the doubts that trouble you. So do not be impatient."

The devotee said in reply that he was impatient, and wanted to know more.

Krishna.—" Is it ? Then listen. It entered into My mind to create rational beings. I had either to create perfect Beings like Myself, or imperfect beings like yourself. It will not be difficult for you to understand that it is not perhaps possible for Me to create Beings like Myself. That being the case, I had to create imperfect beings. And what does that mean ? It means that man has to grow so as to be like Me day by day. It is only a perfect Being who is entitled to unalloyed joy. As man is not yet perfect, so he is not entitled to it, which means that he is beset by imperfections and has to overcome them. But his ultimate destination is perfection and unalloyed joy. Now can you suggest a better way than what I adopted in creating man ?

" There is nothing absolutely evil, for, I gave nothing which has not its use. All that I gave are blessings. It is only abuse that converts blessings into evils. Men, having a free will, go against nature, and thus bring misery upon their heads."

But why do men, Oh my Creator, go against nature ? Why didst Thou not give them power to discern all the dangers that surround them, and power to avoid and avert evils ?

The Creator replied: "In short, you ask why I did not create men and put them in a Garden of Eden and reduce them into the condition of animals? Or why I did not make them perfect?

"That is what you ask Me. But I have already given the reply, and I have to repeat it again, namely, that I cannot create Beings like Myself. To be able to discern all dangers means to be all-knowing like Me. Yes, I could have given men a fruitful garden and an inexhaustible fountain, where there is no danger, no exertion necessary to discern dangers and overcome them. But then man would have found his life without any occupation, dreary, and insupportable. He would have then, besides, never grown; on the other hand, he would have found himself reduced to a worse condition than that of an animal. An animal has its intuitions, which means that it does not grow. To put man for ever in a Garden of Eden, would have been felt by him as a great curse. It is these unseen dangers and efforts to combat them that mark out man from brute creation, give constant occupation and zest to his immortal life, and enable him to grow day by day and be like Me.

"Man has some powers of discerning and averting his dangers now; he has the privilege of developing this capacity. And his exertions to develop them add to his joys and growth."*

"But, my Lord," asks the inquirer, "there is yet much misery in the world, and misery which a man cannot avoid even if he tries to do it."

"Yes," says Krishna, "there is much misery in this world,

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* To give man intuitions enabling him to discern dangers and avert them, would have converted him to the condition of animals. To give man all knowledge and all-power, that is, the capacity of discerning all dangers and providing against them, would be to create him a perfect Being like God Himself. And such an arrangement would have gone against the original plan of making a man a being who is to progress eternally, and by that means approach God. Men voluntarily seek danger to make life enjoyable.

but all-joy means a state of perfection. Take a closer view of what you consider misery. First of all, every evil is the seed of a blessing.* Thus a man may blame Me for having ordained that the moon should be kept hidden from him two weeks in a month. It is, however, the new moon which enables men to enjoy the beauties of the full moon. Suppose, I had given you a full moon every night, you would then have never enjoyed the beauties of a full moon. In the same manner, separation between two loving hearts is considered a great evil, but separation has its uses. It fosters love. Loving hearts, by constant companionship, fail to enjoy the joys that proceed from union. A separation kindles the dying flame. If separation is an evil, union is a blessing. But without separation the blessings of union can never be fully enjoyed. In this manner whenever you see what you consider to be an evil, a little thinking will shew you that it is necessary for the purpose of making life pleasant. You see I don't take My stand on the ground, that being of limited capacities, you have no right to judge Me. I, on the other hand, give you the freest liberty to criticise My work.

"You will find, however, that you will not be able to devise a better arrangement than what I have ordained. Man having been blessed with the privilege of choosing for himself, has to exert himself to make his choice. This, as I said before, gives a relish to life and developes his faculties. But his capacities being limited, he is oftentimes led to commit the mistake of choosing an evil which is, however, as I said before, only the seed of a blessing. Yet men with all their perversities cannot hurt themselves seriously, for, they have immortal life. Choosing evil is not, however, always altogether a misfortune. An evil

* Thus, suppose a slave and his master die. The slave finds himself at once the freest of the free, and enjoys his freedom infinite times better than his master. Thus, his slavery is the seed of a pleasure to which he alone is entitled, and which is denied to his master.

oftentimes proves a very great blessing. Take the case of two men: one struggling with difficulties and the other living in ease. The latter—the man without a difficulty—is not necessarily the more blessed. For, difficulties mean exertion, which makes life enjoyable and causes the development of the man. A man with difficulties, has thus better opportunities of developing his powers, and approaching Me than one with none.

"So, you see, it is not so easy to distinguish what you call a blessing from what you call an evil. If the supposed Eve had not tasted the forbidden fruit, men would have at this time remained in a state of barbarism."

"My Creator," says the inquirer, "in spite of all you say, disease is dreadful, so is death, and so is poverty, imprisonment, disgrace, etc."

"Yes, disease," replies the Creator, "is considered an evil, though it carries with it the seed of health. First, you have the choice of rejecting a poison and avoiding disease altogether. You, however, commit a mistake, and allow a poison to enter your system. Disease is only an effort of nature to expel it. Sin, in the same manner, is a poison of the soul; and repentance is an effort to overcome it. If you are surrounded by poison, you have also the antidotes at hand. So, you see, if nature has given you poisons, she has also given you antidotes. Do not commit the mistake of allowing the poison to enter your system, and you will get no disease. If you make a mistake, select the antidote and the poison will be neutralised. You will say that you have to make the mistakes in spite of yourself, and you cannot select the proper antidote with all your efforts. But, as you develop, you will learn to overcome the difficulties more and more. In case you fail to discover the antidote, nature herself will relieve you of the poison. And if the poison is too strong, death, which is an incalculable blessing, puts an end to your sufferings and takes you to a better world.

"As I said, think and you will find that you will not be able to devise a better and a more harmonious arrangement than what exists. As for these temporary sufferings, men in dreams suffer from them, but in the morning they laugh over the supposed dangers. A man suffers when he is ill, and forgets all about it when he is right again. If a man takes into consideration that he has to live for ever, and that never-ending joy is his destiny, he can easily treat the temporary sufferings of this world with absolute contempt as only disagreeable dreams. A man, besides, who has the knowledge that he is under the protection of an all-powerful and all-loving Father, can trample every misery under foot.

"Death means the transplantation of the man from an inferior to a better world. And it therefore follows that bereavement is a delusion.* Poverty, imprisonment, and other evils ought to be like disagreeable dreams to those who have realised their destiny. Do you not know that men bring all these evils upon themselves because they forget that they are all brethren? It is not exactly My fault that men fight amongst themselves like wild beasts."

It must be borne in mind that there are some truths which seem self-evident. Thus, for instance, the belief that nature can never commit a mistake. There are men who allege they have no faith in God; but there is no intelligent man who has no faith in nature. Nature, which is said never to commit a mistake, solves many of the mysteries of the creation. If nature has given the sexual instinct, so it has divided human beings into sexes. Since nature has given bhakti, that proves that there is an object of bhakti, that is, God. Of course, this very high sentiment is not to be found in equal force in every heart. But all men have it,

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* Says the atheistical preacher Ingersoll, referring to the Lisbon earthquake of 1775: "What was God doing? Why did the universal Father crush to shapelessness thousands of his poor children, even at the moment when they were upon their knees, returning thanks to him?" What He did was this that though their bodies were crushed, He carried their souls to a better place.

either partially or more fully developed. Is it possible that when the human heart hankers after God, nature would have given that hankering if there had been no object? A man may profess himself to be an atheist, but yet he finds it impossible to annihilate the spirituality of his nature. His spirituality proves the existence of the Great Spirit.

In the same manner, one can, by judging the human heart, get a glimpse of the nature of God. Man has a natural liking for all that is good, and a natural dislike for all that is bad. That shows that there is God Who loves what is good and hates what is bad. Man has an aversion for annihilation, and that proves that man is immortal. He has an ardent desire for a union with the object of his love, and that proves there will be a re-union. Says Guizot: "Belief in the supernatural is a fact natural, primitive, universal and constant, in the life and history of the human race. Unbelief in the supernatural begets materialism, materialistic sensuality, social convulsions, amid whose storms man again learns to believe and pray." During the French Revolution God was dethroned; but the mad citizens at last had to acknowledge that they could not do without Him.

CHAPTER B.

A CLOSER OBSERVATION.

YET something more of God, than has been discussed before, can be known by observation. By a close study of creation one can at once ascertain that God has His human amiabilities; that, He is a Being of taste, a lover of beauty and order, nay, that He has also His light moods.

One day in a hilly station we suddenly found a small, beautiful blue flower, hidden in the grass. The soil was hard and stony, and certainly not a fit place to nourish any vegetation. The beautiful flower in such a place, as if purposely hidden from the public view, attracted our attention. The thing looked more lovely because of its uncongenial position, and still more so because of the attempts of the grass to hide it.

The idea then struck us that the Creator must be Himself very lovable, for having created such a lovely thing for us, and also having hidden it from the public gaze. We then remembered to have seen shells beautifully painted, which were fished out of the bosom of the sea. He painted the shells and threw them into the sea as if with a view to enhance its beauty! And when such a beautiful thing is fished out, is not he, who looks at it with attention, disposed to think that the Painter must be a practical Joker, who paints a thing so beautifully and then hides it in the bottom of the sea?

A close observation of nature will show that the Creator

is a lover of beauty, a Being of infinite and consummate taste, withal witty and fond of humour. And how He beautifies the head of a fly! To one who studies the beauties of nature patiently, God will seem to be a tireless Painter, engaged incessantly in painting flowers and beautifying His creation.

We had the privilege of witnessing another scene, perhaps the following morning. It was then early dawn and yet a little dark. We saw a couple of owls making love. Now, the owl has a comic appearance. It has besides a serious look. But we saw the grave owl, in spite of its supposed seriousness, playing mad pranks with his lady to prove his love for her. The comic antics indulged in by the love-stricken bird, vastly amused us. The witness to this scene was alone, and he felt a natural regret that there was none with him to enjoy such a fine sight. Immediately the idea rushed into his mind that he was not actually alone, for, there was at least One who was also enjoying the scene with him—the Creator of the universe!

What a Comedian this Creator must be! thought we. And we then remembered that the world is full of such comic sights. And what disgusting and comic scenes the creatures present when under the influence of their passions! Picture to yourself the scene of two cats fighting. The bellicose attitude that they present; the bend that they give to their bodies; the ridiculous note of defiance that they hurl at each other, are irresistibly provocative of laughter, both to the child and the sage. The bull challenges his antagonist by raising a cloud of dust with his hoof, and rolling himself over and over on the ground. And why does he thus roll himself, if not to provide amusement for the spectators, God and His children? In this manner, fights of goats, of all living things, have a comic side which one cannot see without losing his gravity. Is it not a wonder that though mankind sees how ridiculous even the animals make themselves under the influence of their passions, they are not ashamed of acting pre-

cisely in the same manner under similar circumstances? But this is preaching a sermon.

And have you ever seen how the weaker dog shows his submission to his stronger antagonist? He hides his tail behind his legs, and approaches the stronger with such ridiculous gestures of humility that one is amazed at the delightful fancies of the Being Who had taken the trouble to create such comic scenes! The ears of the ass, the beard of the goat, the frisking tail of the water-fowl, and the face of the monkey, all give an indication of the inexhaustible fund of humour that the First Cause carries within His heart.

But it is in love-making that the creatures, whether they be two-legged or four-legged, winged or footed, carry the antics to extravagant length. Only observe how the goats, the bulls, the cocks, the pigeons, nay, every living creature, including man, make love, and you are amazed at the comedy which is being incessantly enacted around us. In short, an observer of nature can see for himself that almost every living creature has a comic peculiarity, which indicates that the Being Who created them, though inconceivably great, powerful, serious and dignified, has also His lightest moods, and that if He has supplied food and drink for His creatures, He has also supplied them with comic scenes for their amusement and instruction.

Now picture to yourself a lovely Being Who,—living by Himself and not at all visible,—is incessantly engaged in painting and hiding His works of beauty in the most unlikely of places, for the purpose of giving a surprise to His admirers. And picture to yourself a Being Who is fond of wit and humour,—Who is fond of comic scenes so that He may enjoy His quiet laugh along with His children, and you will find that He appears to you in a very amiable light, and as a very lovable Being.

If we see a cock, which, after defeating its antagonist, plants itself on a dunghill to give vent to its shrill cry of triumph, we

find the scene very amusing. We laugh at the vanity and folly of the puny bird which knows not its own insignificance. And is it possible that when Bismarcks defeat their MacMahons, and fire cannons in celebration of their victories, the Creator Himself laughs at them, as we laugh at the folly of the victorious cock, referred to above? Who knows that one of the amusements of that Being, Who is said to be in the enjoyment of continuous ecstacy, is partly derived from the contemplation of the comic side of His own creation?

So, by a close observation of nature, a man can see that God Almighty, after all, is a good Soul. This notion about God is followed by another, which is a feeling of reliance upon Him. And what is this reliance? It is this, that the Creator who is so amiable, ought not to be judged hastily for the seeming defects in the creation, the probabilities being that they are no defects at all, and that they seem so because of our own limited capacities.

Above all, life is a blessing in spite of the sufferings that surround it; for, people do not like to part with it on any consideration whatever. They will sacrifice everything for life. The sufferer will prefer suffering to death; he will yet feel obliged to the Creator for life in spite of its sufferings. If life is a blessing, God must be a friend and not a foe. You have got life and you love it. You cannot get an ever-progressive and ever-enjoyable life without some temporary suffering. That is His law,—even God Almighty cannot make two and two five.

Let us assume the case of one in the spirit-land. George Pelham finds himself in the other world, and an opportunity of communicating with men below.* He says he is quite happy;

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* I have not, as it is beyond the scope of this book, tried to prove the immortality of the soul, and the fact of union of friends in the other world. A greater proof of the future existence cannot be conceived than that of the universal testimony given in its favour by all nations, in all parts and ages of the world. G. Pelham is a spirit to whose existence Dr. R. Hodgson, Presi-

he has no longer the sufferings that he had to go through on earth. He has met his friends who had gone before, and expects to meet those who are to come hereafter. He has no disease, no fear of death, no fear of separation from his dear ones. He has no tyrant to fear and no master to obey. What he has to do is to pursue his own path, develop his own faculties, and proceed on the path of progress for ever and ever, and secure ever-increasing happiness.

George Pelham is convinced that God is good, and that He is to be thanked profoundly for having given him life. He has forgotten all that he suffered on earth and regards them as mere dreams. Just admit a future and better world, and you will see that almost all the evils that beset men are conquered. If one, who has suffered much in this world, finds himself, after death, in a better world in the company of his departed friends, he will not be disposed to feel sorry for having got life, even a life of sorrow. If there be no future life, the Creator is not worthy of the love of men.

If any one, after this, continues to grumble that yet some misery remains to be accounted for, we can refer him to the advice given by Lord Gauranga to his followers. He said that man has no need to be overcome by misery, with the knowledge that he is under the protection of an All-loving and All-powerful Friend in

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dent of the American Psychical Society, an unbeliever before, bears testimony. Professor Sidgwick has proved by close investigation that, nine out of every ten men have witnessed supernatural incidents, that is to say, in a population of ten millions, nine millions do come across facts proving the existence of a spiritual world. But yet the greatest proof of the existence of this after-world is to be found, to my thinking, in the human mind. Nature would never have given this abhorrence against extinction, and a desire for union, if there was no future existence. If there was no future existence, the memory of the beloved would have disappeared from the heart after his death. But the memory remains, and that shows that the desire of union is to be fulfilled.

Krishna! At one time when the bhaktas complained of very great heat, the Lord suggested Krishna-kirtan (hymns about Krishna) as a remedy! One may question the efficacy of Krishna-kirtan as a remedy for the heat of June. The reply, however, is this. When a man is under an affliction, he takes spirituous liquors to drown his sorrows and sufferings. To a servant of God, Hari-nam is much more a powerful agent than a strong drink to an ordinary man. It gives rise to ecstacy in the heart, and over-comes sorrows and sufferings, even sufferings from heat. Besides, it reminds one of that Loving and All-powerful Friend Who is ceaselessly looking after the welfare of His creatures. The remembrance gives him joy and strength, and neutralises the poignancy of his sufferings. *

* Rup and Sanatan, though enjoying royal powers, leave their sovereignty at the bidding of Lord Gauranga, and pass the rest of their days under trees, relying on food that came to them unsought. They had all the sufferings which people would consider unbearable; yet they were, according to their own testimony, happier by far when they were under trees than when they could sleep in palaces. The bhakta has his celestial joys, unknown to the man of the world.

CHAPTER C.

INSPIRATION.

We said that God is also known by inspiration. As meditation follows observation, so inspiration follows meditation. Meditation, carried to its utmost limit, is yoge. To be able to bring the mind to a focus for the purpose of yoge, or union with the great Soul, it is necessary to go through certain processes, which are known to the Indian Yogees. Inspiration, popularly, is a state of mind, which enables it to receive truths from the other world. When a man is engrossed with a deep problem he may suddenly find the solution before him. Sometimes these are the results of his own efforts, but there is no doubt of it that sometimes they are put into his mind by others outside himself.

Sceptics have no faith in inspiration ; but such men are illogical and self-sufficient. Those who have no experience have no right to deny the existence of inspiration, testified to by others having experience. Let them try, and the door will be opened unto them. If they have not the energy or opportunity for such an attempt, the only honest course open to them is to accept the testimony of others, of such beings as Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, Mahomet and Gauranga—beings whom the world have ever considered higher than ordinary men. Indeed, all organised religious faiths in the world are founded upon these inspirational influences of the other world.

I am sorry my impression is, that meditation has not

flourished in the West. Is it due to the proverbial restlessness of the people? This is what Mr. Stead was inspired to write by Julia, supposed to be a disembodied spirit:

"The worst evil of the present day is not its love of money nor its selfishness. No, but its loss of the soul. You forget the soul is the thing. And that all that concerns the body, except so far as it affects the soul, is of no importance. But what you have to realise is that men and women of this generation have lost their souls. * * * Your soul is lost now. And you have to find it. * * * You have lost it as you might lose a person in a crowd. It is severed from you. You are immersed in matter and you have lost your soul. And the first and the most pressing of all things is to find your soul. * * * You say you have no time. But you have time to make money, to amuse yourself, to make love, to do anything you really want to do. But your soul that is a thing you do not care about. So you have no time for the soul. * * * And you have materialised yourself."

It seems to me, this state of affairs is due, among others, to two causes, *viz.*, one is misconception as to the nature of God, and the other is misconception as to the nature of Christianity, a religion which has given the training to the minds of the Westerns. Jesus Christ taught a religious life and a moral life. The religious life taught by him being too high, has been only partially accepted by his followers. The ordinary Christian says his grace over his dinner, repeats a prayer when going to bed or rising from it,—a prayer which has lost all life by frequent repetition,—hears a sermon in a week, and gives his alms. Meditation thus forms no part of the duties of an ordinary Christian.

Jesus Christ recommended prayerfulness, bhakti and love of God. This is the religious side of Christ's teaching. But the Christians accepted the sermon on the mount, which is only a discourse on morality, quite outside religion. To give alms, or to

forgive an enemy, is, no doubt, an act of merit, but it is an act of morality and not of religion. The duty that man owes to man is not religion but morality. Religion deals with communion with God. An atheist who is charitable, just, good, forgiving and so forth, is not yet a religious man. Indeed, an atheist, who obeys all the precepts preached on the mount by Jesus, is yet only a good man and not a man of religion. A man who holds communion with God, alone in a wilderness, and has no opportunity of performing a moral duty, is yet a religious man. The performance of moral duties is, of course, essential, but it comes, naturally to a man who tries to be *en rapport* with God.*

Meditation means self-effort; it is a duty which one must perform himself. There is no royal road to it. In the West, science, politics, fighting, novel-reading, amusement, money-making, ambitious projects take away the time of the highest. The man, blessed with the powers of meditation, apply them, not for the purpose of elucidating the problems of life, but the mysteries of natural science. A man of the West, with indomitable courage and perseverance, tries to find the North pole or gold in Klondyke. That is the way the best energies of the West are utilised.

Now, it must be borne in mind that God is more worth a search than even the North pole. There is more gold in Him than in Klondyke. If every gift in this world requires a good deal of exertion to secure it, God, the best gift of all, needs at least that amount of energy which is required in mastering

* Lord Gauranga never posed as a teacher, but only one among his fellows, seeking Krishna. He never rebuked his followers, indeed, he had very little occasion. What he did was to grant bhakti, which so thoroughly purified the blessed being that it became hateful to him to break a moral law. His followers never preached moral doctrines to their fellows, knowing full well that moral life must follow a religious life. Besides, they had to address a more advanced audience; and if they had repeated what Jesus told to the Jews in his sermon on the mount, the Brahmins would have found nothing new in their teachings, and never listened to them.

science, and carrying out ambitious projects. And, therefore, prophets advise that it is necessary to knock and knock to make the door open. What is the value of the testimony of those who deny inspiration, but have never knocked?

There are many processes to develop the practice of meditation. The ordinary way is to sit down and think of yourself and God. Think of such problems as these: Does God exist? If so what He is like? What are your duties to Him? etc. Try to think out these problems, excluding all worldly thoughts as far as that is possible. If the mind wavers, try to bring it to a point. Make supreme efforts for the purpose. The result will be that light will surely dawn on you gradually, if you are an honest seeker after truth.

The best course for a seeker is to begin as a believer, and apply to God direct for the solution of the mysteries that pester him. The seeker may be a sceptic, but a little search will show him the traces of His existence in his own heart. The self-sufficient atheist, who knows nothing, will get nothing, for, he is not a truth-seeker and wants nothing. But the honest and sincere sceptic will find an immediate response to his prayer, if he earnestly submits it to His lotus feet. Those who have no objection to give the Almighty any form, may ensconce Sree Krishna, or any other form which delights him, in his heart, and such men will find the process of meditation easier than those who seek to contemplate Him as light or *akas*, *i. e.*, practically nothing. Let him continue this process persistently. As God is not to be had lightly, let him be not disappointed, if he fails to get any response at once. Mind, ascetics pass their whole lives in the wilderness to find Him. Continue the process, trusting in the words of the saints, who have preceded you, and the result is likely to be marvellous.

You may ask, if it is so easy why do not people generally follow the method? But do you know the stern fact that scarcely one

in a million ever seeks to find God, or cares to find him ? Even those who seek Him, do it for gifts, and not for Himself.

Let us take the case of a seeker after the Lord. Let us follow him step by step. The account given below may or may not be based upon fact. It is not necessary for any one to believe in the truth of the account, to profit by it. This seeker after truth cuts himself off from society, makes supreme efforts to know God, and, if possible, to associate with Him. By incessant efforts he succeeds somewhat in turning his mind towards God.

The first response that he gets is the sight of a mass of light which dazzles him. He feels at the moment that he has at last seen something of God. He contemplates the light, awe-stricken. He at last ventures to address it. But a mass of light never speaks and he addresses in vain.

The ascetic* tries to open communication in various ways. He addresses the light ; he addresses it in endearing terms ; but light is only light and can never speak. "Speak, speak, my Lord," he implores the light, but to no purpose. He then comes to doubt whether the light is God at all. "But are you God or mere a work of His creation ?" and he is pestered by doubts. He prays : "Let me know, kind Creator, by unmistakable signs that the light that I see is something of Thyself." The light increases in intensity, and the ascetic has to open his eyes to avoid the sight. This is the *teza* or *akas* which the Yogees see.

In his second stage, he finds that the light is but the cover of a human figure within it. He is now made sure that he has at last seen God,—a Being Who has created himself and the universe.

The figure is that of a man, but a giant in stature and pro-

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* Purity and bhakti are essential for success in a seeker. But the process itself will secure to him both. A contemplation of high things has the likely effect of purifying the soul, and a comparatively pure man will feel a natural impulse of bhakti for God.

vided with more heads than one, and more hands than two.* The Figure is awe-inspiring and frightful to look at. The ascetic is overtaken by awe and fear ; he kneels and prays for protection. Here, to realise the scene, recall to mind the first meeting between Friday and Robinson Crusoe. The ascetic dares not speak out his mind to the Figure before him.

The Figure, however, smiles, and encourages, by his friendly attitude, to regard him without fear. "What would'st thou have of me? Here am I," says the Figure. "Ask of me any *bar* (gift) and thou shalt have it," repeats the Figure.

The ascetic is over-joyed at the request ; for, all his wishes are, at last, to be gratified, and he thinks profoundly to select his gift. He prays for powers,—large powers !

"For how long?" asks the Figure.

The ascetic.—For ever and ever.

The Figure.—You want power, but despotic rulers find their lives very miserable, for the very short time that they have to live on earth. And you would adopt such a life for ever and ever! I give you warning. The more you are provided with power, the less disposed you will be to use it. Immortal life, without pleasant occupation, would be inexpressible misery. † Better take care what you ask. Besides, illimitable power includes authority over your fellows. But your fellows are likewise my children, and they have claims upon me. You want me to favour you at their cost. If I give illimitable power to

* This is the Vishwarup of the Geeta. Nitai and Adwaita both saw such a sight.—See Vol. I, pages 132 & 140.

† The author in another book describes the condition of one who is blessed (cursed?) with absolute powers. The result of all this was that he became inert and he lost all desire, nay, even of the company of Lord Himself. A man, provided with large powers, would, no doubt, in the beginning, find some pleasures, but he would get tired of the privilege and finally consider himself the most miserable of men.

all, the arrangement will mean nothing to any one of you. Bear also in mind that, possession of authority and exercise of power, over fellow-beings, debase the soul.

The ascetic.—Grant me immortal life, with pleasant occupation?

"What is that occupation? Immortal life you have already," asks the Figure.

"My Creator," says the ascetic, "I know not what to ask for, since I see there is no happiness in power. I always thought that supreme happiness consists in power. Select the *bar* for me."

The Figure smiled. "My selection," says He, "may not meet with your approval. In this matter, you ought to be able to decide for yourself. I am here prepared to give you whatever you ask for."

The ascetic.—Yes, I tried to find one, but I could not. Whatever I select, whatever I have been taught to consider a blessing, is found, on examination, to be something like a curse, at least a blessing with curses accompanying it. I don't know what will be good for me.

The Figure.—There is unmixed pleasure in the exercise of the higher faculties. If there is some pleasure in the exercise of the baser ones, there is misery too. But eke out unalloyed joy by being good and doing good. Serve and be happy. What will you say to My companionship? Would you consider that a blessing?

The ascetic pondered. He hesitated to give a rude answer; for, the companionship of God, that he was enjoying then, was not giving him much happiness. But he had to be frank with One Who could see through him. He said: "My Creator, I had a notion before that if I had ever access to Thee, I would secure power which I thought was the choicest of all blessings. But now I have got Thee, and I see I have noth ing to ask for. So I have no motive any longer to seek Thy companionship

for any service to me. And as for any pleasure from your company, Thou art so high that I feel myself paralysed before Thee. In fact, I am a frail insect. Thy presence is already taxing all my strength, and I feel a faintness coming over me.* In Thy company, I feel practically a dead man.

The Figure.—Forget that I am so high as you now choose to think me.

The ascetic.—That is impossible. Are you not incomparably greater than I ?

The Figure.—I will help you. I will be just like you, only a man, and then you will forget most part of the awe you feel for me now.

The ascetic.—Yes, if you can be just like me, I may tolerate you. But yet even then I will prefer the company of my wife, children, and friends.

The Figure.—That is because you love them. If you can but love me, you will find joy in my company. If you only know how I love you, you will give a portion of your love to me.

The Figure said this and vanished.

Now, the principle must be borne in mind that fear repels, and love attracts. Men, as a rule, do not seek God ; for, they have been taught to fear him. Those who profess to seek God, are moved by selfish purposes. One serves Him to avoid being thrown into hell, and the other to secure gifts or a place in Heaven. But God Himself is never sought, and no one wishes to establish any disinterested relationship with Him.

The fact is, God is depicted, though indirectly, as a monster of cruelty by most religious faiths, that prevail in the world. Jesus taught that God is the Father of all, and men should love Him. But popular Christianity teaches that God is wrathful and vin-

* In the great Revelation Day (See Vol. I, page 159.) the bhaktas had to pray to God to leave them ; for, they said, His presence was proving unsupportable to them !

dictive; and that He inflicts tortures upon the vast majority of His children for ever and ever, and only saves a few. The idea about Him, among average Christians, is that He is like a Magistrate with irresistible powers, engaged with His Police Angels in detecting the failings of humanity, and exacting fearful vengeance for their shortcomings.* Of course, God is called merciful and good, but that only to secure His good will. For God, according to popular notions, is a tyrant, and, as such, a fool and is easily deceived by a few flattering addresses.

The aunt of Lord Tennyson was a rigid Christian. Her greatest pleasure consisted in the contemplation of, not only her own joys in Heaven, but the sorrows of the damned. The following lines from the life of Tennyson, by his son, will clearly show the feelings of an ordinary pious Christian :—

> This aunt was a rigid Christian, who would weep for hours because God was so infinitely good. "Has he not damned," she cried, "most of my friends! But *me*, *me*, He has picked out for eternal salvation; *me*, who am no better than my neighbours." One day she said to her nephew: "Alfred, Alfred, when I look at you I think of the words of the Holy Scripture: 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.'"

Compare the above with the prayer of Basu Datta who prayed to take the sins of all mankind on himself. (See Vol. II, page 273).

The ordinary † Buddhistic theory is, that there is a ceaseless struggle between man and the Creator, and that if the one

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* As the interests and person of the sovereign are protected by sedition laws, so is God protected from so-called "insults" by the provision of "blasphemy." It is "blasphemy" to talk lightly of God, say they. But God is so incomparably high that the difficulty consists, not in revering, but in belittling Him. No one can belittle the Creator of the universe in his heart; he can only do it in a spirit of bravado.

† I say "ordinary" Buddhism with a purpose; for, I think that there is no difference of opinion between real Buddhism and Vaishnavism, as regards the future of man. There is no doubt that man is born again, though not on this earth, but in the spiritual world. The Geeta says that the soul takes another body immediately after it has lost its cover, and this is emphatically

object of the Creator is to keep man alive for the purpose of torturing him, the one object of man is to escape from His clutches by extinguishing himself! Unfortunately, a considerable body of the Hindus have imperceptibly imbibed this horrible doctrine of birth and re-birth, which, if it be true, proves God to be a most inhuman monster of cruelty.

It is the Vaishnavas alone who are taught to seek God not for His favours, but for His own loveliness, and Lord Gauranga's advent on this earth was mainly due to impress this truth upon mankind, that God is an object of love and not of fear.

People complain that God is not seen. But how can one see God who does not seek Him? People complain that God is never sought. But why should one seek God, who entertains the notion, in his heart of hearts, that He is a monster of cruelty?

So you see, a misconception of the nature of God is at the root of all this mischief, why there is no desire and attempt to see God.

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true. That he dies again in the spiritual, to be born again in another still better, world, is also probably true. It is also quite true that sometimes men, after their death, quite unfit to live in a spiritual world, take a new body on this earth. The man who has no spirituality in him is, by a kind Providence, given a chance again on this earth to acquire the necessary qualifications, so as to fit him for the spiritual world. As a child comes out of the womb to find new surroundings, so a soul is born in the other world with surroundings fitted for its existence. If the surroundings of a man in the spiritual world do not suit him, indeed if he is too gross for that world, he has to come down by a benevolent provision of nature. As sometimes there is abortion in this earth, so there is sometimes abortion in the other world, as for instance, in the case of idiots and savages without sentiment, etc.

Is then a new soul created on every occasion a man is born?—asks the philosopher. But is that a difficult feat for the All-powerful Almighty? Evolution and eternal progress, as the Hindus and Buddhists truly say, are the laws of nature. Animals grow out of the vegetable kingdom, and the chimpanzee out of the animal creation. From

The truth, that God is a loveable and not a frightful Being, is not the exclusive property of the Vaishnavas : no truth is the exclusive property of any class or sect. The ancient Vedas advocated prem, Jesus Christ did it, so did the Sufis amongst the Mussulmans. The truth, that God was an object of love and not of fear, is known to all, but realised scarcely by one in a million. The Sufis called God "the Beloved," and the holy spirit the "wine that gladdens the heart." Christian divines, here and there, overcame the popular superstitions that bound them hand and foot, and reached the lotus feet of God. St. Theresa of Spain found the spirit of inspiration in her heart, and she consulted the priests. They told her that the Devil was upon her, and she should struggle to avoid the Evil One. She struggled hard to

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the champanzee is evolved the savage or the idiot without higher sentiments or spirituality. And when the man is so developed as to be able to suit himself to the necessities of a spiritual life, he is transferred into the world of spirits. It would be against our conception of nature to think that it would hurl down a man again to this earth, where he had already gone through the experience necessary to individualise him. An experience of this earth is necessary for the purpose of individualising a soul. It is his impressions here that make him a distinct entity, distinguishing him from others. When he has been individualised, he is born again in the spiritual world. Why should such a man come again on this earth? Is it possible that nature, like a bad workman, has the failings of an uncertain experimentalist? It creates a man, but the creation proves a failure. It then destroys its creation and with the substance creates another. It goes on this manner, till, at last, after hundreds of attempts, it succeeds in creating one who is not required to go through the same process once again! Thus Robinson Crusoe wanted to make earthen pots, but he failed. With the clay he tried again and again. But nature, as I said, must be unerring in its instincts. The tenets of Buddhism, as it prevails in Thibet, its most important seat, are the same as those of Vaishnavism in regard to the future of man. The doctrine of re-birth, as popularly understood, practically means that God has given the highest sentiment of love in the human heart, only for the sake of torturing him! This is outrageous.

extricate herself from the clutches of the so-called Devil, but she could not. And at last she came to realise that God was not the wrathful and revengeful monster that He had been described to be, but the Partner of her soul. She learnt to feel that "she was His and He was hers." Now this is exactly the secret doctrine upon which Vaishnavism is based, *viz.*, "I am His and He is mine."

The genius of modern civilization consists in supplanting self-exertion by machine power. Inspiration itself has thus been sought to be brought under the control of every man, by means of spiritual circles. By this method, inspiration is drawn from above. When the sitters are good and intellectual men, they sometimes succeed in eliciting truth of the highest importance. I have already quoted some high thoughts which Mr. Stead succeeded in getting from a good spirit in the other world. Here is another passage which Mr. Stead was inspired, by the same spirit, Julia, to write (See *Borderland*, October, 1897):—

Oh, my friend, you know not nor can I ever pretend to begin to explain the exceeding wonder and glory and infinitude of the sense of realized Love of God for us in which we live and move and have our being. I wish that I could make you feel more. I wish I could explain it better. But I cannot say more than that—it is more than I ever dreamt of. All that you know of earthly love—the love of mother for her child, the love of bridegroom for bride, the love of husband and wife,—all earthly love and ecstacies of affection are but the alphabet of the language of Heaven. And the more ideally and unselfishly you love, the more you understand God and have God in you, the hope of glory.

The above are the parting and last words of Julia to Mr. Stead. Yes, the love of God for man is beyond the reach of even the dream of puny humanity, and the loves displayed on the earth are but "the alphabet of the language of Heaven." I know of nowhere where the love of Heaven has been *described* in more powerful language. But Lord Gauranga *distributed* it

"to every householder, jar after jar, from the inexhaustible fountain of love contained in the treasury of Radha at Golok (the highest heaven) what he brought down with him on this earth." The meaning of the metaphor is that, Radha's treasury in the highest heaven is an inexhaustible fountain of prem from which Lord Gauranga drew for distribution here, and he did it as freely as one does with water, taken from an inexhaustible well or river. The above noble words give a glimpse of Vaishnavism, the religlon which the Lord taught.

Here one may ask that, if the highest truths could be obtained with so great ease by spiritual circles there is no need of the toils of yoge and inspiration, and neither is there any necessity of Avatars. Inspiration drawn in this artificial manner, however, is much inferior to that acquired by natural means. It is one thing to know a truth, and another thing to realise it. To know intellectually what love is, is quite different from feeling the emotion in the heart. The pious Yogee does not only know the truth, but can assimilate it. The noble words quoted above have been read by thousands, but very few, if any, have been able to utilise the sentiments to their advantage. Lord Gauranga not only preached love, but showed what it was by practising it, nay, also by imparting it to those who had made themselves deserving of receiving the precious gift.

The highest Yogee is, however, powerless in moving millions. The utmost that he can do is to preach the truth or impart the holy spirit in an indirect manner to a few. But a being of authority, whose power is irresistible, is needed to move millions. Such a Messiah is Lord Gauranga, the last and the highest. He was ever irresistible. He showed practically Radha's love for Krishna, a feat which it is impossible for mere men to accomplish. Men knew before the advent of the Lord, that the highest form of worship was prem; but it was Lord Gauranga who first exhibited it, almost as one does a material substance,

to the wondering gaze of his followers. The last twelve years of his life he devoted in enjoying the ecstacies that flow from the exercise of Radha's love for Krishna. The nectar that he dug out for the benefit of mankind, during these years of his trance, is too ethereal for expression by language. Though every one is free to enjoy it, one has to be a Gopee to be able to do it. A description of the doings of the Lord, during the last twelve years of his existence on this earth, is certainly beyond my powers. I have no doubt they will be described hereafter by saints who have attained to the highest position, which one is able to do in this material world.

CHAPTER D.

SCENES IN BRIDABAN.

THOSE who have been able to *realise* that God is an object of love, and that indissoluble ties of love bind them and Sree Krishna together, are inhabitants of Brindaban. These blessed beings have been able to secure the companionship of Sree Krishna, whom they see whenever they feel an earnest desire for His company. Those who have attained to Him by conjugal love are Gopees and are, of course, females (spiritually), and those who have won him by fraternal love may be either females or males. Each has his or her own Krishna, though they know that there is but one such Being. Yet every one of them has a fond belief in her or his mind that, if Krishna is the beloved of all, and if Krishna loves all equally, yet there is greater intimacy between her or him and Krishna than between Krishna and others.*

They sometimes meet Krishna alone, and then they are engrossed with each other, forgetting the presence or even the existence of others. Sometimes they find Krishna amongst themselves, and sometimes they meet together, without Krishna.

Radha is the chief of the Gopees, a part and parcel of God. God is man plus something, Radha is the human part of God. God is perfect in all His parts ; His human part is perfect too. Radha, therefore, is a perfect being.

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* Every companion of Lord Gauranga fancied that there was a greater intimacy between him and the Lord than between him and others.

converse, there was another Gopee close who too was engaged, in the same manner, with her Sree Krishna. Though they were close to the other couple, the couples took no notice of each other. This second Gopee was also passing her time in bliss with her Sree Krishna. She was passionately fond of mathematics; so, of course, was her Sree Krishna.

Second Gopee to her Sree Krishna.—My beloved, I have solved the problem in quite a different manner from that indicated by you.

Second Sree Krishna.—Is it? Let me see.

The second Gopee explained the problem, but Sree Krishna smiled and shook his head. "My dear," said He, "here is a fallacy." And Sree Krishna pointed out the mistakes in her calculation.

Second Gopee.—Well, I must then give up. Kindly solve the problem for me.

Sree Krishna then solved the problem, and took infinite pains to explain its intricacies to the Gopee.

Second Gopee.—I love mathematics,—to me nothing is like it. I don't know what I would have done without it. How I tire you by my ignorance!

Sree Krishna.—You tire me! If you love mathematics, so do I. Our tastes are the same, and hence I have been able to secure your undivided love.

But there were other Gopees with their Partners. A Sree-Krishna and His beloved Gopee were engaged in painting. Another Gopee and her Sree Krishna found the greatest pleasure in music. While another couple were engaged in enjoying the beauties of the creation. A Gopee was reciting a poem that she had composed, to the delighted ears of Sree Krishna.

A philosophical Gopee found the greatest pleasure in the solution of the problems that surrounded her. She said: "My Beloved! Why do you not explain to me the mysteries?"

Sree Krishna.—Because I prefer that you should find them for yourself. The effort will secure to you both pleasure and profit.

Gopee.—I mean mysteries referring to yourself. They are beyond my capacity. Well, tell me, first of all, who created you ?

Sree Krishna.—Really I don't know. And if you pester me with such silly questions, you will compel me to fly from you.

Gopee.—Well, then tell me why you created us.

Sree Krishna.—Who told you that I created you ? It is you who created me. Was I not pervading all space, a shapeless mass of nothing ? You wanted to associate with me, and by the supreme effort of your will I was evolved out of that mass of light or *akas* or whatever you choose to call it, to meet your requirements. Your heart yearned after me. In whatever shape I appeared to you, I failed to give satisfaction to that yearning. I had thus to take the form which delights you the most. So it is you who created me, a man out of that all-prevading *akas*.

Gopee.—And what a Man ! The most beautiful, the most perfect, the most delectable and bewitching beyond all comparison.

Sree Krishna blushed. He said : "Yes, I might have appeared to you as an ill-formed, ill-dressed, dirty man. But that would have been an ill-requitement to your devotion. If I were to associate with you as a man, I thought that I should do my best to appear before you so as to please your fancies.

Gopee.—But tell me why you created us ; you evaded my question by raising a side issue.

Sree Krishna.—Has not every one of you a desire to create ? A man with a lump of clay will create, say, figures of animals, or of any other thing his fancy dictates. An idle man with a pen will write poems. I had a desire in my mind to create, and having time and opportunities, gave play to my fancies.

Gopee.—I believe you had some deeper motives, pray let me know all.

Sree Krishna.—If the above explanation does not satisfy you, here is another. There is joy in love and I had none to love. I was alone. And now I have got you for an object, and we shall spend our immortal lives in the felicities that proceed from love.

Gopee.—You talk of immortal life, the idea seems inconceivable to me. What has one to do these innumerable number of years?

Sree Krishna.—When a child is born, he is provided with the occupation that is necessary for him for his happiness. When he is a little boy, he finds his occupation also, he is day and night engrossed with his playthings. In this manner, man, as he grows up, finds his occupations supplied, suited to his tastes. Why should the thing appear inconceivable to you? If immortal life is possible for me without ennui, I ought to be able to make it possible for you too. For, you grow every moment more and more like me. In the same manner, if an ever-increasing joy is possible for me, an ever-increasing joy ought to be possible for you.

Gopee.—There is one idea which always troubled me. It is impossible for us to do you any service, indeed, you need none; on the other hand, we are utterly helpless in your hands. You have no master; you are irresponsible. You can annihilate us by your will and there is none to hold you responsible for your acts. Why don't you annihilate us?

Sree Krishna.—Because I am not a fool. Why should I annihilate my own creation?

Gopee.—That is not it, you are very kind to us.

Sree Krishna.—If I am kind, I get a good deal of service from you. Whenever you tend the sick, console the aggrieved, and help the fallen, you serve me. Do you not know that?

Gopee.—We serve us, not you. But what is it that binds ycu to us? What is it that leads you to be so good to us?

And what is the assurance that, if you are kind now, your kindness will continue for ever and ever ?

Sree Krishna.—Keep this principle in mind that it is not possible for me to give you what I do not possess. In other words, you can take it for granted that since you are evolved out of me, what you have, I must have too. You have in your heart a sentiment which urges you to sympathise with misery and to remove it. You call it mercy. Well, if you have it, who gave it to you ?

Gopee.—Of course, it was you who gave it. But, my Beloved, your mercy is not always visible to us, poor creatures.

Sree Krishna.—Here you differ from my poor creatures, for, they all call me, all-mercy, etc., etc.

Gopee.—My dear Lord, of course, they call you so, but you know better than all, that though they say all that with apparent enthusiasm, in the heart of their hearts they only regard you as a monster of cruelty.

A shade of sorrow *seemed* to pass through the moon-like face of Sree Krishna. The Gopee was deeply affected by the sight. She said: "What is this ? Sorrow in your face ! Sorrow in the face of the Being from whom proceeds all joy ! My Beloved, you alarm me ! "

Sree Krishna checked his feelings and smiled. He said: "My beloved, do not forget that I have to be like you to be able to enjoy your company and love, in the fullest degree. Why should I not, therefore, have my sorrows as you have ? You want to hear what ails me ? But do you know I have to listen to grumblings, every moment of my existence, and am not in the habit of enumerating my sorrows to others ? Well, is it not strange that my creatures, endowed by me with the power of judgment, should exercise their ingenuity in judging me ? Undeveloped as they are, they yet subject me to their limited powers of criticism. They think me cruel. But who gave them

on the other hand, increases the ecstacy of the speaker this is "discourse about Krishna." It enables the speaker and listener to enhance each other's enjoyments. Those who speak about Him, derive ecstacy from the delightful talk, and bestow ecstacy upon their listeners; and those who listen, enhance the ecstacy of the speakers by their sympathy, and this is the way everyone is blessed by Krishna, and everyone, blessed by Krishna blesses others!

Another Gopee sang a song in the excess of her joy. It was to this effect:

"The hue of blush on the cheek of a modest maiden;
the sweet smiles of a child;
the embrace of lovers;
the tears in the eyes;
the sacrifices of the mother;
the fidelity of the wife, and the mercy of the philanthropist
are Thy conceptions.

They lay bare Thy heart to the delighted gaze of Thy servants."

And what the Jamuna under a *Kaminee* tree coverd with its sweet-scented flowers. I. Krishna was not there, yet in everything they felt His presence. In each other's delightful company, the Gopees derived almost the same amount of happiness as they did from a communion with Sree Krishna Himself. Were they not, these Gopees, exceedingly beautiful? But their beauty proceeded from their spiritual grandeur. They were guileless as children, they loved, and, therefore, were in the constant enjoyment of ecstacy.

"Let us talk of our Beloved," said one of them, and others clapped their hands in delight. As they all felt disinterested love for Krishna, there was no jealousy among them. Their love for Him was such as to throw them into ecstacy by the very mention of His name. Said one: "My dear sister, what a wonderful being Beloved is. Even His name is wonderful like Himself. My tongue dances with pleasure when uttering His name!"

Second Gopee.—Do you not know what He ordained? He thought that as the poor creatures on earth find it difficult to reach Him, He would make His name as powerful in giving delight as He Himself is, so that they could yet enjoy celestial delight by uttering His name only.

Third Gopee.—I oftentimes feel that I can spend my immortal life in ecstacy simply by uttering His name.*

—when a Gopee speaks of Krishna, her heart is overflowed ... why? Because that is His ordination. Has He ... Him sweet? Her sentiments throw ... she betrays when express- ... of the listeners,